

FIRST PUBLICATION OF
LETTERS FROM
W. H. HUDSON
EDITED AND WITH AN
INTRODUCTION AND
EXPLANATORY NOTES
BY EDWARD GARNETT
WITH A PHOTOGRAV-
URE PORTRAIT & AN
ORIGINAL SKETCH
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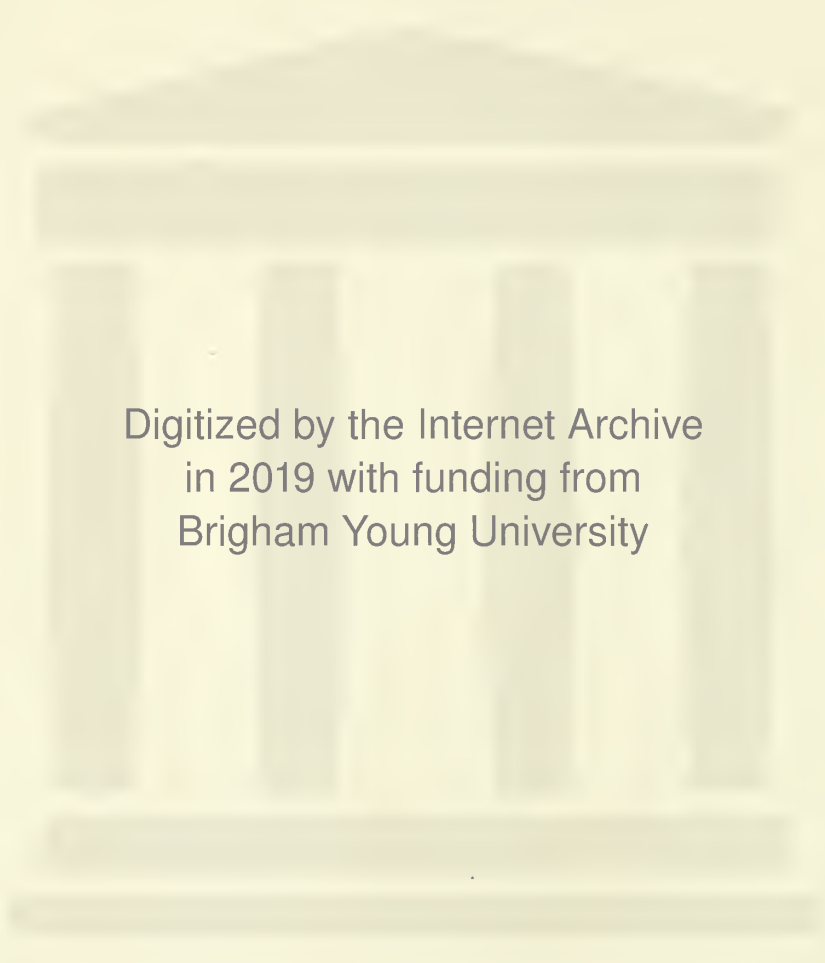
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*This edition, printed and made in England, is
limited to one thousand numbered copies, of which
this is number 973*

The photograph of W. H. Hudson on the title page is by Opie, Redruth.

The INTRODUCTION

I

I FIRST met Hudson in September, 1901, over the publication of "El Ombú." It was my last day as Heinemann's "reader," and I was clearing up my work when a lad announced "Mr. Hudson!" and looking through the window I saw a tall, dark man standing on the leads outside my little room. Some weeks before I had impressed on Mr. William Heinemann that "El Ombú" was a work of genius and that he must publish it. "But we shan't sell it!" objected Mr. William Heinemann in his nervous, excitable fashion. He had temporized, afraid either to return the MS. or to accept it, and now Hudson had come to learn his decision. I went up to Hudson and told him that he had written a masterpiece. Its grave beauty, its tragic sweetness, indeed, had swept me off my feet, as it does now when I read it. Hudson glared at me, astonished, as though he wished to annihilate me, and asked my name. I told him, adding, "It's my last day here. Where can I meet you?" Suddenly his face changed and he said, "Let's go and find a place to lunch." I took him to the Mont Blanc in Gerrard Street and we talked about "El Ombú," about books, about the publishers, their words and their deeds, and about other things I have now forgotten. In a few weeks I became Duckworth's "reader," and was able to arrange for the publication of "El Ombú" in "The Greenback Library." Hudson soon formed the habit of lunching with me, nearly every Tuesday, one of my two days in town, and he would tell me innumerable stories and anecdotes and discuss books with me. Literary acquaintances that I made about this time would also

come to the Mont Blanc, and in this way a small circle of habitués was formed, such as Thomas Seccombe, R. A. Scott James, Stephen Reynolds, Edward Thomas, W. H. Davies, Hilaire Belloc, Muirhead Bone, Ford Hueffer, Perceval Gibbon, occasionally John Galsworthy and rarely Joseph Conrad. Hudson liked being in touch with this set of younger writers, whose interchange was free and cordial, and he became especially attached to Edward Thomas. I speak of these weekly meetings with Hudson for the following letters grew out of them, Hudson often writing me a note if he could not turn up on a Tuesday, and I, in my turn, replying or sending him a book likely to interest him. When away on one of his country excursions he would read some review I had written in "The Academy," or "The Speaker," or later, in "The Nation," and at our next meeting he would approve or condemn it vigorously.

I have known several men of genius, remarkable minds, but no man's personality has ever fascinated me like Hudson's. I loved him for his bigness of nature, for his warm and tender heart, for his passionate intensity, for his capriciousness, but beyond this I took pure æsthetic delight in his character. The sea does not appeal to some people, and I have sat in Hudson's company with men who seemed insensible to his charm. But these were rare. I should think that few men have aroused such warm responsiveness in their fellows as Hudson. Wherever he went, wherever he appeared in roads or fields, in cottages, inns, country houses, people succumbed quickly to the spell of his personality. His tall dark figure, his brusque vivid talk, his magnetic eyes, his strength of manner and the spice of mystery in his movements captivated his hearers. People were warmed by his rich vibrating feeling, by his picturesque aloofness, by his intimacy of tone, by something strange in his attitude, by his intense zest in the living fact. And by this power of vivifying his hearers and of stimulating their interests Hudson was a king in any company. What he loved to gather from others above all

was some characteristic anecdote or story, curious, dramatic, or tragic. His power of feeling transfigured the simplest phrases. Thus in his mouth the words "a beautiful woman" stirred one's imagination and one's heart, and one felt a longing to know and meet this woman in whom such ripe beauty flowered. And women instinctively recognized in Hudson his immediate responsiveness to their grace and charm. His passion for beauty in Nature and in women and in children was like a warm undercurrent intermingling with his rich intellectual interests. It may be noted how often in his books and occasional papers Hudson refers to "a friend of mine," namely one of the many individuals for whom he stored up warm feelings in the inexhaustible chambers of his memory, somebody whom he looked forward to meeting again when he should next revisit the neighbourhood. The legend of Hudson's being a recluse—partly fostered by himself in his latter years to avoid superficial contacts—has gained credence. It is true that he disliked accepting invitations to meet new people : he would decline and make some excuse. But his friendly acquaintances were numerous. In the letter of April 15th, 1906, on the death of my father, Hudson says, "It seems to me that if I had preserved all the letters *worth keeping* I have received since I came to England they would now number not less than 20,000." And this correspondence did not include his wide circle of chance country acquaintances, mostly in humble life. In the course of my early conversations I was particularly struck by the number of people he had met in past decades, in circles then being fast thinned out by death. There were in fact two sides to Hudson's social instinct, as there were two sides to his genius, and an examination of "Far Away and Long Ago" gives the right perspective for judging their interrelations. On the one side his heart, the most deeply human of all men's I have known, made any little drama of life an intensely absorbing reality to him : on the other side his free, untamed spirit, the hunger of his senses and spirit for Nature and his

passionate affinity with "the earth life" bade him cast off as a burden our crowded streets and towns and all their congested affairs. His instinct oscillated between the poles of two forces, the human and the wild. But Hudson always reckoned as the strongest force in him the passion for Nature. Thus in his letter, December 14th, 1917, on "Far Away and Long Ago" he discounts my praise of the picture of human life: "Of course these middle chapters would interest you more in the book, but the real interest of the book is the feeling for Nature and wild life—and *that* appeals only to those who have it in them, in whom it is a passion and more to them than interest in human character and affairs. If the book is worth anything it is that in it and nothing else—at all events it is certainly not in the human portraits." Would that I could portray here Hudson's dark, rich glance and his triumphant, rising inflexions of tone as though to say, "There! put that in your pipe and smoke it!" And he would have listened with condescending pity if in my turn I had demonstrated to him that the appeal of "Far Away and Long Ago" lies *both* in the human drama of the South American *estanciero* life and in the wild environment of the pampas and in his picture of Nature's illimitable fecundity therein. And if I wrote him to this effect I can see Hudson in my mind's eye tossing the letter aside and saying, "That's the bee in his bonnet!"

The fascination of Hudson's strange personality lay in this two-sidedness, the human passing into the elemental. One may use as a simile that of a fire at night in the open air with the flames, while casting light and warmth around them, leaping skyward to mingle with the elements. One felt that on this elemental side Hudson was indeed, as Conrad once said, "a product of Nature." He kept this side of him, his wild and mystical sense for Nature's life, for his solitary hours. But it was there always, like the skyline, and it gave one a feeling of the indefinite breadth of his nature, of its commensality with creation. He sought for this elemental feeling in

the poets and welcomed any evidence of it in others. Thus, in my own case he fastened on an early prose poem of mine, "The South-West Wind Seizes Earth," and repeated emphatically, "I wish I had written that!" and then flattened me out by adding, "Ah! you'll never do anything like that again!" On his human side a most fascinating characteristic was his waywardness, his capricious instinct for taking a sudden leap aside, separating himself arbitrarily from others. This was the artist in him asserting himself violently, wilfully emphasizing certain aspects to secure picturesque chiaroscuro in his talk and in his writings. It always fascinated me, this capriciousness, and instinctively I would parody quietly his violent tone while contradicting him. Hudson himself much enjoyed opposition, and his own capriciousness was partly a device to sting others into declaring themselves. In his books and sketches the characters he loves are those who emphatically go their own way. His capriciousness and his "prejudices" were to be taken æsthetically: in certain of these Letters some examples are like streaks of vivid colour on a flower's petals. A characteristic instance occurs in his letter of December 14th, 1920, in which after skilfully turning against me some of my remarks on the Coalition Government's European and Irish record he adds, "Although I am convinced *all* Governments are bad and must be bad because they are composed of human beings, *this* one is the best to be found in the dim hell that men call earth." His declarations, elsewhere, about Ulster, perfectly genuine as they were, are to be taken with an appreciative smile. Another good example of Hudson's delight in stinging, picturesque emphasis will be found in his letter of December 17th, 1916, where after stigmatizing my article on D. H. Lawrence as "a strangely laborious composition as if you were trying to convince yourself as much as the reader of the man's genius," he knocks down both Swinburne "the great poet" and Lawrence "the little poet" with one blow! Certainly this and other thrusts will not hurt my friend D.H.L., who is himself

addicted to passing the most scathing verdicts. To appreciate Hudson's talk fully (and incidentally some of his Letters) it was necessary to have a sense of *his* humour. And certain people failed to recognize it because it was very deep. Hudson's largeness of nature so set off his malice (which could be keen) as to provide the antidote. It was his width of mental range and experience, combined with his perennial freshness—as of an old tree that has sheltered innumerable creatures beneath its branches and still keeps putting forth green leaves—that gave Hudson's conversation its rich savour. He did not say remarkable or acute things, and he would be silent while others talked merely cleverly or trivially, but his thought was so taken up with reflections and observations, with memories and fresh examples of life's character and drama that his creative intensity, his zest and curiosity seemed inexhaustible. He had nothing of the author's vanity, for his interests all surged outward away from himself into the fields of life. He seemed unconscious of his own books so busily were his thoughts and sensations occupied with the flowing ocean of nature round him. His melancholy, his sympathy, his capriciousness, his underlying passionate-ness, his freedom of bearing and unselfconsciousness, all blended to create an atmosphere warm yet invigorating like a liberating west wind. One felt great vistas opening behind his memories, and his tragic wistfulness was like the melancholy of sunset moods, casting premonitory shadows.* Breadth and largeness of nature, emotional profundity and

* I may add here that while Hudson's head (so Mr. Morley Roberts asserts, on Sir Arthur Keith's authority) was a perfect example of the Beaker type of the Bronze Age, an Irish friend of mine, Mr. L. O'Flaherty, tells me that Hudson's features and whole cast of expression are of a West of Ireland type and can be paralleled in his own family. Now while Hudson's father was a Devonian, his maternal grandmother was an Irishwoman, and I have always held that Hudson both in his responsive emotional nature and in his brooding melancholy was emphatically of a Celtic strain, however much his genius owed to the admixture of other elements.

the richest zest and curiosity about nature and life—such were the fundamental qualities of the creator of “Green Mansions,” “El Ombú,” “Idle Days in Patagonia,” “A Shepherd’s Life,” “Far Away and Long Ago,” to name but five of his masterpieces.

Hudson’s distrust of biographers was strong and persistent. I remember disturbing him once by declaring that to comprehend a man fully all his life and actions must be laid bare. He protested, surprised, shaking his head, repeating “What everything?” but as we were walking in a crowded street at the time the subject dropped. I realized later that we were looking at the matter from different angles. I was thinking of such a case as the life of Robert Burns and his foolish biographers’ external judgments. But Hudson was thinking of the curiosity of the mean, scandal-loving world and of its insatiable appetite for personal “revelations.” Hudson, I hold, was perfectly right in ordering his executors to destroy his papers and discountenance any biography. He felt that he had distilled the lasting essence of his life and character in his books. He had given the world much, and there were private aspects and circumstances that he did not wish discussed. This instinct became very strong in his last years. We see from his letter of April 16th, 1906, that two lengthy series of his correspondence with two old friends are lost to the world ; and a year or so before his death he told me of a third series, also destroyed, which had been returned to him by the executors of another old friend. There must, however, still be in existence a large number of his letters, apart from the valuable series Mr. Morley Roberts possesses. Although Hudson himself might have regarded these Letters to me as of little importance, they do in fact convey most characteristic glimpses of himself and of his astonishing vigour and vitality of spirit in his last twenty years. They convey also much of his brusquerie, though little of his poetical feeling or his haunting charm. They illustrate in special his wide literary outlook. I print them believing that Hudson

the man and the writer will appear to posterity a far bigger figure than he appears to men to-day. In editing the Letters I have had to cancel a few, to strike out certain personal passages and, in the case of a few living people concerned, I have substituted fictitious initials for real names. Though Hudson's Letters are rarely dated with the year of composition I trust that only in one or two cases are my own dates at fault.

II

The correspondence, as I have said, was a by-product of our frequent meetings. It was spontaneous and irregular on both sides. So meagre is the record for certain years that I fear some of his Letters to me must have perished. As with our conversation so with our correspondence, we took pleasure in rapping each other's knuckles affectionately. Like nearly all the authors I have met Hudson was readier to blame than to praise, and as my practice was always to lay stress on the strong points of an original piece of work we had some pretty sparring. I believe that Hudson's reluctance to praise contemporary work sprang largely from the fact that he had seen excessive laudation lavished on so many popular Victorian mediocrities. But the reader must, however, guard himself from taking all Hudson's sharp criticisms *au pied de la lettre*. A number of them, such as that on "The Voyage Out," were rejoinders to some encomiums of mine and were rapier thrusts at my ribs. The highly interesting letters on Doughty's "Dawn in Britain" were a counterblast to an eulogy I had penned, and one that Hudson himself modified later, as may be seen from the evidence of his letter of May 14th, 1916. And as regards this letter I must add here that his remarks in no way reflected on De la Mare's poetry, of the high quality of which Hudson himself had expressed to me on several occasions his strong appreciation. I remember also Hudson telling me on one occasion that his reading of "The Dawn in Britain" had seriously impaired his taste for smoother kinds

of verse. So with some of the other criticisms, they were his *obiter dicta*, penned by the artist who loved picturesque and striking emphasis. With these qualifications it will be seen what an admirable, if severe, critic he was.

The slow decline of Hudson's strength may be traced in his correspondence. Despite the alarming vagaries of his "irritable heart," for the ten years 1901-10, Hudson showed surprising vigour and resilience of spirit. But in the autumn of 1911 his wife's increasing infirmities kept him confined for a long period to his house in St. Luke's Road. His health suffered gravely from lack of country air and exercise, and then a new despondent note made itself felt. Then came further illness, and then the War obliterating the old landmarks. Friends fell apart and saw little of one another. Hudson, wiser and possessing a deeper philosophy of life than most men, was, I think, less hag-ridden by the weary interminable march of European carnage. He knew better the futility of "views," and he turned with a shrug and a sigh back to his permanent interests. He stayed much in Cornwall, and I saw little of him during those years. And later, in the last five years of his life, Hudson's mental vigour was no less astonishing. Bitterly as he resented his inability now from failing strength to revisit his old haunts, deeply as he felt that he stood alone like an aged solitary tree, the last survivor of all his friends and the circle of his early family, his mental energies still burned with their old passionate fire. That a man of seventy-six* should have woven on the loom of his memory so exquisitely fresh and variegated a tapestry of the sensations and emotions of his youth as in "Far Away and Long Ago" was an extraordinary testimony to his undecayed faculties. At our meetings each summer when he returned from Cornwall, though he complained of fatigue, the multiplicity and variety of his interests showed little diminution. I did not marvel. He was an extraordinary man, no less extraordinary in the winter of his old age than in

* Mr. Morley Roberts estimates that Hudson was born in 1840.

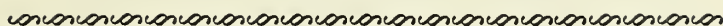
his prime. It is true that the asperity of age shows increasingly in his later letters, but one marvels at his vigour and unabated courage in face of the bouts of anguish he suffered from his heart, which still, however, continued to serve him, like an old tyrannical servant. So vital was Hudson's spirit to the end, so gallantly did he bear the burdens of old age, that only at our last meeting, nine days before his death, did I perceive signs of a break-up. But his conversation that day was still as varied and absorbing as ever. As always, while he talked I watched all the shades of feeling in that strange face, whose rugged strength and sweetness were graven with fine lines, the traces of all his spirit had rejoiced in, or mourned over with the force of his passionate manhood. But that face I was only to see again in death.

EDWARD GARNETT

November, 1923.

The Letters

Letters from
W. H. HUDSON



I

THE PINES SILCHESTER *October 7th 1901*

DEAR GARNETT,

— Will you kindly allow me to drop the Mr. ?

The MS. of "El Ombú" is at home and I will gladly send it to you on my return.

Heinemann's terms did not suit me, so I asked for it back and got it before I left London.

I have been getting wettings and dampings during the last few days and the result is a cold. That's delaying me, as I want to shake it off before leaving a comfortable place to stay at—the *only* place at Silchester. Remember the address if ever you want to come this way. The people at the Pines, a house on the edge of Silchester Common, are named Lawes.

I want to go on from here to Coombe, in the North-west corner of the county, and the highest hill in Hampshire.

The excavating is just about over for the season, and all of ancient Calleva which has been unearthed in 1901 is being reburied—for ever. The last thing opened was a well 40 feet deep and on Saturday and this morning some nice things in pottery, iron work and coins were taken out.

Many thanks for writing.

Yours ever,

W. H. HUDSON

2

40 ST. LUKE'S ROAD W. *October 16th 1901*

I am back in town for a few days—do you come up often ?
Shall I send “El Ombú ” to you in the country, and have I
got your address right ?

Yrs.

W. H. HUDSON

3

40 ST. LUKE'S ROAD W. *October 18th 1901*

I am sending you the MS. I should have read it over
before sending it, but have no time now. It might be im-
proved I fancy.

Shall try to see you on Wednesday next at Henrietta St.—
at one or just before.

Yours,

W. H. HUDSON

4

40 ST. LUKE'S ROAD W. *December 29th 1901*

DEAR GARNETT,

What makes you so wonderfully proud ? for I presume that
this most unchristian quality is a cause of your heaping gifts
of books on me. Nevertheless I am most deeply obliged to
you for the two noble volumes. Already I have been reading
the first chapters of Anna,* and wish I had come to the work

* *Anna Karenin*. By Leo Tolstoy. Translated from the Russian
by Constance Garnett. 2 vols. Heinemann. 1901.

from the first in this better translation. And a Lear of the Steppes*—ah, what a story to harrow one's feelings ! I do not think—I am pretty sure—that I ever read anything to equal it in its tragic power as well as in that true, that right, realism in which the Russians are so great and of which we are I suppose incapable.

Your article in Contemporary Criticism† was excellent, and of course A—— L——,‡ who is a good fighting cock, will be having at you with his polished spurs, probably in "At the Sign of the Ship." I have not seen the January "Longman's " yet.

I didn't answer your letter at once as I was not certain about the days when I should be free. Nor am I quite sure now : but I think it probable that on Wednesday next I may be at liberty, and if so I should prefer to go down with you at 4.55. I shall drop you a line at Duckworth's to let you know, and we might then have lunch at Gerrard St. and meet later at Charing Cross. Till then Adios.

Yours,

W. H. HUDSON

5

40 ST. LUKE'S ROAD W. January 9th 1902

DEAR GARNETT

Thanks for your letter and pardon delay in replying. I was sorry I couldn't meet you at Gerrard St. last Tuesday, but I had to keep in just then : a loosened molar hurt my gums, or gum, and the pain of it was taken up by neighbouring muscles who all combined to make a sort of neuralgia

* *A Lear of the Steppes and Other Stories.* By Ivan Turgenev. Translated from the Russian by Constance Garnett. Heinemann.

† The Contemporary Critic. *The Monthly Review.* December, 1901.

‡ Andrew Lang.

of the whole thing—turned it into a company so to speak. Even the throat joined in with a swelling of what the playful physiologists call a *sympathetic* gland. However, I'm all right now, and perhaps we shall meet at the same place next week.

"The Times" must be giving you plenty to read just now, what with Bacon-Shakespeare and Rudyard Kipling. I love both cricket and football as a looker on, but I'm glad he went for the excessive passion for sport and for other things in his "Islanders." I'm not sure how high that composition can be ranked as poetry,—but I wish I had written it.

It was amusing to read Andrew Lang's defence. He does not take himself with owl-like solemnity so why should anyone trouble about what he has said about Tolstoy or anybody or anything else! But (all the same) he hates Tolstoy, and is glad to say ditto on that matter to Valdez! What a funny defence!

Valdez I say, but I forget who it was—Palucios perhaps, or Perez Galdos.—Never mind, it all comes to the same thing.

I hope Sneezer is flourishing.

Yours,

W. H. HUDSON

6

40 ST. LUKE'S ROAD W. February 12th 1902

DEAR GARNETT

Sorry I couldn't meet you yesterday. I meant to go to-day to Duckworth's but am not well. I wasn't well yesterday, but had engaged to lunch with friends in Kensington, and then went with them to see Miss H——'s pictures.

I can't get copies of the works you wished me to give Mr. Duckworth for America. I haven't time to cut down

now and get copies made—and very little desire to do it, so must let it rest till some future opportunity.

Your letter the other day made me smile, and as I didn't know how to express a smile in writing I didn't answer you.

I am very pleased to let D. have the Marta Riquelme story—I offered it with the others to begin with.

I hope I shall be more lucky next week and see you one day. I've promised to attend a meeting at Hanover Square on Tuesday next, and perhaps you will be free that day to meet me at Gerrard Street at lunch time.

Yours always,

W. H. HUDSON

Miss H.'s work much liked but my friends couldn't buy.

7

40 ST. LUKE'S ROAD W. Tuesday evening (?) *February* 1902.

DEAR GARNETT

It never entered my mind that to-morrow is Wednesday and I shall have several friends calling to see me in the afternoon, some staying to supper, so of course I couldn't go down with you. I don't think I could manage it this week anyway as I want to try and get on with something I am doing. If I do go one day I shall wire to you and go by Westerham and walk over. I'm blest if I can think of a title to put on "El Ombú," unless we simply translate it into *The Tree—or The Tree on the Plain*. The story itself doesn't suggest any title without some word in Spanish or a Spanish name and that wouldn't mend the matter. Marta Riquelme is a really good name of a person for a title, but it would be no more understood than "El Ombú." Or you might call it by the other title of a short story—"The story of a piebald Horse."

People wd understand that and books of short stories quite often have for title the name of one of the shorter ones in the volume.

Adios,

W. H. HUDSON

8

40 ST. LUKE'S ROAD W. May 4th 1902

I don't quite know from your letter what the idea is. "A popular Library on such *Subjects* as Darwin, Haekel, Huxley." Do you mean little biographies or elementary works on science? In any case it strikes me that books of that kind are thick as leaves in Vallombrosa. Very many men take up science as a living and failing to get the rewards they aim at, Professorships, &c. they take up the trade of writing books for Educational purposes or for the man in the street. I know some of these poor fellows who get a pale wan face in the British Museum and the libraries of the Geological, Zoological, Linnæan and other Societies and are always willing to do books of that kind for a very moderate payment. But to start a new series and make it pay you must be prepared to compete with the sweaters. Look at Dent's Science Primers—very good little books, written by specialists and sold for one shilling! The man with the proper equipment and a gift of writing pleasantly does not as a rule go into the series produced by the poor hacks. Take Edward Clodd for instance: he can do a very pleasant book on Darwinism, Folk Lore, Primitive religion, Evolution in Man, &c.—but would he do it for you? I fancy not. 'Tis a matter requiring a good deal of thinking over before you attempt it.

I can't get away just yet, so shall perhaps see you next Tuesday if you turn up at Gerrard Street.

Yours,

W. H. HUDSON

TURNER'S HOTEL WINCHESTER June 16th 1902

DEAR GARNETT

I shall not see you to-morrow. I may go up but would not be there in time to lunch with you. I am not sure about returning just yet. The weather has rather spoilt my spring this year and I am in doubt about what to do. Since Saturday I have been staying at Itchen Abbas with my friends the Greys—and last evening we discussed Lawson's book* which Lady Grey had just read. She likes the sketches you marked and one besides—"A Visit of Condolence"—but doesn't think as much of Lawson as you do. She is a clever woman and it will be interesting to hear her opinion of "The Fields of Dulditch"†—I am lending her your copy. She had just succeeded in getting a copy of "The Purple Land" and thinks well of it. I get letters from friends begging me to tell them how and where to get "El Ombú," and one enclosed a note from a bookseller asking the name of the publisher as he cannot find Elombu. I have not yet read "A King" ‡—I had begun it, but the Greys wanted to read it so I left it with them.

What a nice old city Winchester is! I have known it since I knew England, and only during the last 2 or 3 years began to find out its charm. Before coming here I was at Hungerford, then Coombe—a small village in the hollow of the highest hill in Hampshire—how many h's in this sentence! Then Boldre on the New Forest, and

* *When the Billy Boils.* By Henry Lawson. Angus & Robertson Sidney.

† *The Fields of Dulditch.* By Mary E. Mann.

‡ *A King and His Campaigners.* By Verner von Heidenstein. Duckworth & Co., 1902.

Bournemouth, and if I do not go back to-morrow I shall probably go for a week to Fawley, near Southampton Water.

I hope you are well and tolerably happy in spite of "weather."

Yours ever,

W. H. HUDSON

IO

June 19th 1902

MY DEAR GARNETT

Your geese are all swans, we know, but this individual goose must be simply grateful to you for your splendid advocacy. As a person, or goose, with the old fighting Adam pretty strong in him, I must be specially grateful to you because you seem ready and even anxious to knock somebody down.

In one way your article has already hit the mark. I didn't know it was in "The Academy" until this morning, first post, when I got a letter from Ch. Longman asking for the loan of a copy of the book* "which Mr. Garnett believes is not to be obtained through any of the ignorant and degenerate race of publishers."

That was not prettily nor even quite lucidly expressed ; but he goes on to say—"perhaps it might be worth while to consider a new Edition" !

I wish I could talk it over with you on Tuesday, but I can't as I shall be in Hampshire, and you I dare say will not come up in Coronation week.

I came up from Winchester only to hear that my wife had just sent me a letter to tell me not to come up, as she was going to join me. All I could say in the circumstances was

* *The Purple Land.*

that I had guessed what she wanted and had come up expressly to take her down ! So on Monday I go to—

Rollstone,
Fawley,
Southampton,
Hants.

The “Hants” by the by is optional, and Fawley is near Southampton Water, on the Forest side, 8 miles from a station, and most delightful spot to one who looks on the wars of kites and crows as of more importance than our petty human affairs.

Yours ever,

W. H. HUDSON

II

ROLLSTONE FAWLEY SOUTHAMPTON HANTS *June 27th 1902*

DEAR GARNETT

Thanks for your letter. The farmer's wife here told me she had received a letter about “apartments” from Miss H. Well, the truth of the matter is they don't let apartments or I shouldn't be here, since apartments, which means a place or set of rooms, apart, is not what I like, my taste being always to live with people, eating at their table, being a member of the family so to speak, sorrowing with them, as Scripture has it, where there is nothing but the old cold joint on the table again, and rejoicing when someone kills a rabbit. I don't see that Mr. H., your neighbour, could stand living here as I do, breakfast at 7, dinner at 12 o'clock, and all that sort of thing, and to be satisfied with the rather coarse kind of food. The one attraction is the rough forest—wood and water and bog and heath, where one can lose oneself and stumble about in the underwood for hours and get killed by all the different

sorts of stinging flies in these islands. That I like, but I find there are people who don't like it. We are out of the world here as regards news, and on Wednesday passed the day in the belief that the King had died. I came here feeling rather seedy but am now getting all right I think. I am with my wife and we haven't settled when we go home yet, but it will probably be not till the 3rd or 4th of July. I am doing no work at present and no faintest gleam of any desire to work at anything has visited my poor weak brains since I came down. The greenness of the Earth mocks my faded state.

Yours,

W. H. HUDSON

I 2

ROLLSTONE *July 2nd 1902*

DEAR GARNETT

Thanks for writing—also for “envying” me. I'm in a cloud of flies by day in the woods, and the result is I smart and burn and tingle and itch all night. Are these the “delights” you would like to have! But I mix myself up in the private affairs of weasels, voles, squirrels, adders, stag-beetles, snipe, peewits, &c. &c. and I get my pleasures that way and it more than compensates me for the pain. But it has been very trying during the last few days (till the rain came) and the flies in the King's Copse were almost not to be borne—— Still, I'm sorry I must go back on Friday as I haven't got much out of watching the creatures this time.

I return Graham's letter, but (God help me!) I can't make it all out—the lizard story* is simply maddening. A “learned pig” might say that his description “about 4–6 inches long, spotted and sort of web-footed” would probably apply to

* A letter from R. B. Cunninghame-Graham from Morocco.

some thousands of creatures. But tho' I'm not a "learned pig" I'll try to find out the creature's scientific name for him. I'm very sorry to know he is hurt. His way of speaking of it reminds me of the story of Santos Ugarte. But the Arab and gaucho have the same way of thinking about such things. A lady writes to me from a London suburb about the effect of the King's illness—"One could hardly believe it when the horrid and hateful cries of 'Special,' began it on Tuesday night. One of my first thoughts was frivolous—I thought how One who was greater than Santos had said: Yes, you are a very fine fellow, and you look after gifts to the poor, and you endow medical research for the cure of disease, nevertheless I *am not quite satisfied with you, &c.*"

I hope to meet you next Tuesday, but if you should not come up to London that day I daresay you will let me know. When birding days are at an end for the summer season I may take up "Green Mansions" but I feel rather coldly about it now.

Good-bye,

W. H. HUDSON

13

40 ST. LUKE'S ROAD W. July 20th 1902

MY DEAR GARNETT

Thanks for your warning which I got yesterday first post: but of course I had heard all about the tunnel collapse by then.

This will be a nuisance to you unless the damage is made good pretty soon. It took me till about 12.30 to get to Charing Cross by the 10.20 from Brasted.

Mrs. Close would be delighted to know you and Mrs. Garnett, but I didn't say that I thought you would call on her. I am pretty conscientious, and I didn't know that you *would*

like to call. In that lodging in a little grocer's shop she is not quite out of the world, and has her maid, and a groom, and carriage and three horses and two dogs down with her, and all the Kentish world "calling on her, and some great people from Town paying her flying visits." But tho' in that world she is not quite of it. Tho' all her people are rabid Imperialists she is and proclaims herself a "Pro-Boer" and wishes more power to David's elbow in his wars with the village boys. And somehow in spite of the demands of society she lives her own life, and all the daylight hours from 5 o'clock in the morning, when she is not walking or driving, are spent in reading and in work. On Friday after lunch we drove to Sevenoaks, and then by Seal to a beautifully wooded country where we had tea at a very pretty old inn, getting back about 8 o'clock in the evening.

I am thinking of going to Hampshire on Tuesday next, but am not sure, and if I don't go till Wednesday I shall drop in at Gerrard St. on the chance of finding you there at luncheon time.

Please don't curse me for sending you the Valdepeñas, the small dozen bottles which I wanted to give you so long ago—and which you wouldn't have without paying me back. I have ordered the Gt St Helens wine man to send it to you at Westerham Station, but I don't suppose it will be there for two or three days. If you will take it in a proper spirit I will agree with you that W(al) W(hitman) is not only a great genius but a poet as well.

With kindest regards

Yours ever,

W. H. HUDSON

The "Star" had a very favourable notice of "El Ombú."

40 ST. LUKE'S ROAD W. August 25th 1902

DEAR GARNETT

You didn't say when you were coming back. Should you be back by to-morrow look not for me at Soho. I'm just off—in woods and wilds the naked savage ran. I have just finished "*Forest Folks*."* Excellent up to a certain point—to be measured in pages—say about two-thirds of the book. Then the author begins to go wrong, to put too many surprising not-to-be-believed and wildly melodramatic events in his later chapters.

But Nell is a good character, a living being, and that alone is a great achievement.

My address for the next few days will be—

c/o Mrs. Bliss,
Sheepcrook & Shears,
Bransbury,
Barton-on-Stacey,
Hants.

I hope David is getting better—poor wounded thrush !

Yours ever in haste,

W. H. HUDSON

* *Forest Folk*. By James Prior. Heinemann. 1901.

BRANSBURY BARTON STACEY R.S.O. HANTS

August 31st 1902

DEAR GARNETT

I have been so much amused with this . . . letter which my friend Mrs. Hubbard lent me, that I am sending it on to you to read too : it makes one think of Walter Raymond and some of his old village folks. This Mrs. Z. is a delightful person, a clever artist (I shall try to get a sketch or two out of her for my next book), full to overflowing of humour (she is Irish you see), but she had the misfortune to marry a man who was without the faintest spark of that quality. He was a retired Major, who went in for geology and other serious things, and who used to write papers and deliver dry little lectures illustrated by himself. There was one lecture on the Universe, and how the worlds were formed out of chaos, and it started with a painting of things in general when all was without form and void ! How his poor wife ever survived that picture I don't know. Fortunately the little man died (he was very small)—or went away to live in a less frivolous world than ours. I hope the letter will amuse you—please send it back to me here as I am not yet ready to depart from this spot. In the forests of Harewood close by I was so lucky as to discover a colony of the great green leaf cricket, usually called grasshopper, and I have been studying their manners and customs, and have besides other things to observe in this place. I wish I could find some clever young artists to do a few drawings for me. I am having a few done by J. Smijt, who did some things for “Idle Days” but he can't manage some of my subjects at all.

I hope to hear that David is really well and that you enjoyed your few days at Winchelsea. With kind regards to Mrs. Garnett.

Yours ever,

BRANSBURY BARTON STACEY R.S.O. HANTS

september 5th 1902

DEAR GARNETT

I shall ask a friend or two—kind helpful old ladies—if they know of anything or can suggest anything in the gardening line.

It is I fear hopeless to think of Kew. Those who have any responsibility under the despotic Director possess out of the way knowledge, and those under them are mere workers at exceedingly low wages.

I have three large green grasshoppers on my table here, and one rings his little shrill-sounding bell. Another being a female was made silent. About the third there is nothing to say except that he waves his long antennae—long as his green body—and tries to look intelligent. He only succeeds in looking what he is—quaint *Acrida Viridissima*. But he is next to the glow worm the most poetic insect in England.

But just now I am chiefly interested in earthworms and wish you could spend a happy afternoon this wet day in helping me dig for them in the boggy ground by the water. There may be some interesting variety there.

Yours with best regards,

W. H. HUDSON

Postscript

Your grasshopper and mine—*Acrida Viridissima*—stridulating at this moment on my table. Shall put him back on his heath by and by.

40 ST. LUKE'S ROAD W. *October 4th* 1902

DEAR GARNETT

I am still here,—since I saw you last we—my wife and I—have been both suffering with bad colds and coughs, and waiting day by day to feel well enough to go away. Every day this week was to have been the day, and now to-day we have put it off to Monday. We go first to Winchester and after a couple of days there to Alton, then to Selborne where I believe we shall stay a week as I know two or three nice cottages to stay at, and I want to hunt in the woods and commons a little in that part.

I was sorry to miss seeing you last Tuesday. Here is your book, and the other—the Turgenev—I shall put in my bag to read it when travelling, and send it to you from down there. My wife likes it. I seem to get little time to read although in the last six or seven weeks I have not once failed to be up at six o'clock—A.M. not P.M.

When this trip is over I may be able to go further South, Lymington way. I have some good friends down there at Boldre where I am accustomed to stay and then I shall be able to see Miss Patmore. Alas ! good old animal-drawer Smit sends me drawings which will not do, and so I return them to him, and I must go on hunting all about for someone able to draw a mouse or sparrow or bug.

With best regards to Mrs. Garnett and respects to David.

Yours ever,

W. H. HUDSON

40 ST. LUKE'S ROAD W. October 6th 1902

DEAR GARNETT

I did not go to-day and shall not try again till Wednesday, so hope to get my cutlet, &c., at Soho to-morrow and hope you will turn up at 1.30.

The work I do is little enough I assure you—I'm more interested in what you are doing. That Cuchullin saga* has a strange fascination—naturally, since it blows upon and brings a glow into the old long buried and almost extinguished ember we still carry about in us. How comes it that the book you mention (Doughty's)† has not come into the Remainder Market?

Yours,

W. H. HUDSON

SELBORNE ALTON HANTS October 13th 1902

DEAR GARNETT

I intended this to reach you to-morrow morning at the office but our evening post has gone, so it will not reach you till—goodness knows when, probably Wednesday.

I want you to do me a favour—to send a copy of your Matthews‡ books to—

Morley Roberts

Authors' Club

3 Whitehall Court

S.W.

* *The Cuchullin Saga*. Edited by Eleanor Hall. David Nutt. 1898.

† *Travels in Arabia Desert*. By Charles M. Doughty. 2 vols. Clarendon Press. 1888.

‡ *The Art of Winifred Matthews*. An Essay by Edward Garnett. Duckworth & Co. 1902.

The three remaining copies I can get when I am back in town. It is rather miserable down here, wet and muddy—you can't imagine the mud of Selborne, a grey soapy substance that sticks to you. But yesterday was fine, the one fine day I've seen this long time, and I spent a good half of it on Noar Hill, a sort of twin of Selborne Hanger, but with very much finer beeches and a good deal of wild life.

There is just now only one poor little cottage where any accommodation is to be got here, and when we arrived we found it already in the possession of someone else. However it turned out to be a person I knew, A. E. Martin, who wrote a Gilbert White Bibliography, and he shared his sitting room with us, and two others who came a day later. Now they've all gone and we can move and write a letter if we feel inclined.

I liked your work very much, but shall read it again by and by before saying more about it. Your Turgenev I have just read and with your kind permission (really without it) I am going to send it on to Mrs. Hubbard and her daughter, Mrs. Wynnard Hooper, to read before returning it to you.

I hope you are all well at the Cearne.

Yours ever,

W. H. HUDSON

20

SELBORNE ALTON HANTS *October 20th 1902*

DEAR GARNETT

Thanks for yours of the 16th and for the offer of the book. I think it would be best to send it at the end of this week or the beginning of the next to 40 St. Luke's Rd. as we have our small Gladstone bags as full as they can be at present. And we have some books. The only fiction I have read here

—I wonder how I found time for as much—is Turgenev's "Desperate Character"* and the other stories, and Graham's "Success,"† which I do not like as well as other things he has written. The weather has continued stormy and wet with a good day occasionally. Yesterday was one, and instead of meekly going to church with my wife I walked to a village 4 miles away, over hills and dales, and stopped on the way to admire an ancient timbered manor house in which a farmer's labourer lives—a house wh for beauty and dignity puts to shame the hideous erections of modern architects and of millionaires. The village of Priors Dean where I went consists of a farm house, two or three cottages and a church, very ancient, but no better than a cottage. By it grows a yew tree which might be a thousand years old ; and that's all there is. A most lonely silent peaceful spot. Its desolation fascinated me more than the other small villages—a dozen or twenty—I have visited about here, and I must write something about it. And about these small old Hampshire churches generally. If you were with me you'd say—"What about the people?" Well, anyone who cares for such subjects could find whole volumes of romance in the lives of the people who have existed in these small communities. I think I shall stay here seven or eight days longer.

Yours,

W. H. HUDSON

* *A Desperate Character and Other Tales.* By Ivan Turgenev. Translated by Constance Garnett. Heinemann. 1899.

† *Success.* By R. B. Cunninghame-Graham. Duckworth & Co., 1902.

ORIEL TEMPERANCE HOTEL WINCHESTER

November 20th 1902

I found your note here to-day when I only came last evening, and am sorry you are suffering from a chill. How this awful cold hasn't killed me during the last two or three days I don't know. I delayed my departure from Silchester to give a lantern-slide exhibition to the school-children, and Tuesday evening was the time fixed by the Rector. I got about 80 slides and had a good room full—all the school-children and a sprinkling of adults. We finished some time after 9 o'clock and I then had to walk over the common—stumbling among the furze bushes in the dark in the face of the wind to get back. Next morning early I packed up and sent the lantern-slides &c. back to town and went off myself—I had 4 miles to walk to Bramley, wait an hour and a half there for a train; wait again 2 hours at Basingstoke for one to Alton, and an hour and a half there for a train to Winchester! I was half dead with cold when I got here. What I wanted to do here I can't do—take some snapshots of places on the Itchen, so I think of starting to-morrow to Brockenhurst and staying a few days in that part. To-day I have spent the time in the Castle listening to criminals' trials before Mr. Justice Day, and in the Cathedral for afternoon choral service. There were some dramatic incidents in Court to-day and I admired the Judge very much. He is a lover of birds and is Mrs. Bontine's great friend, so I was inclined to admire him. But he was splendid on the Bench. He spoke with bitterness of the authorities here for keeping men 3 and 4 months in gaol before sending them to trial, and some of his sentences were so lenient that the poor condemned wretches were amazed themselves.

You never mentioned Bunny in your note. I hope he is well and without a cold.

My kind remembrances to Mrs. Garnett.

I have seen the very favourable reviews of C.G.'s "Success" in the "Daily News" and "Athenæum" and was very glad to read them.

Yours,

W. H. H.

22

ROYDON HOUSE BOLDER LYMINGTON HANTS

November 26th 1902

DEAR GARNETT

I have nothing interesting to tell as I am still living an indoor life at Silchester and other places. The air is better than London and that's all the difference. But it is a considerable one. With the good pious people I live with here my health improves. They swear not and drink not, except tea and cocoa ; and breakfast is at 7 o'clock, and the last meal (after prayers) consists of boiled milk and bread. And as they live I live—prayers and all ; except the two or three or four times a day I suddenly think of tobacco and jump up, put my cap on and rush out, rain or dry, and have a pipe, then come back again looking as innocent as possible. But yesterday I cycled to Lymington and rapped at the door of Solent House and saw Miss Bertha Patmore. She is no more a recluse as you called her than you are yourself. She was delightfully nice, and shewed me the original dormice picture, and all her work including the illuminations she is working on now. She is quite willing to do me some wee beastie pictures for the book if I can put it off till after Xmas, and give her the beastie I want, as she can't evolve it. Well, I'll see about that later on. But Miss B.P. in wanting the animal before her is exactly the contrary of a Mr. W. who lives close

by, and exhibits at the Academy, and keeps himself and wife and 4 daughters and 5 sons by painting pictures mainly of New Forest Donkeys. I was so pleased to hear it that off I went to see him (one of the girls here took me) and saw his paintings, then asked to look at his sketch books and studies. He had none ! He makes no study and doesn't need to. His knowledge of the Donkey, Forest pony, &c. is so good that he never wants to look at one to paint it. He sits in his studio painting his donkeys out of his head, and that's all. Naturally, he paints the donkey in his head and not the one in the Forest. But here I am at the end of my paper, so must
[*Rest wanting*]

23

40 ST. LUKE'S ROAD W. *December 12th 1902*

MY DEAR GARNETT

Pardon me for not replying sooner to your letter telling of your mishap. My time since I came back has been very much taken up—and I am easily upset by too many calls on me. I hope you are really getting better now and will be able to come up next week. Many accidents have I met with—guns and pistols and bad or stupid men, and horses—vicious or false-footed—and cows with sharp horns, and water and fire and trees and knives and flints and carts, have at various times brought me to grief, but oddly enough never an axe tho' I've cut much wood and many many trees. The other day I chopped up oak wood in the New Forest—years had past since I handled an axe but I had not forgotten how to swing and strike with it.

You were too kind and generous in your words about "El Ombú" the other day in "The Academy." I had read it before you wrote, and had also set down the review of "Youth"* to

* *Youth*. By Joseph Conrad. Blackwood & Sons. 1902.

you. I shall have a copy of that book in a day or two. And I shall be delighted to read Belloc's "Path to Rome." That was a book I had put down the name of to be purchased as soon as it got into the Smith and Mudie Sale lists. And I also intend one day to get Prof. James' "Varieties of Religious Belief."

I had a letter a day or two ago from Miss B. Patmore enclosing a sketch of a wee beastie, so perhaps I shall get a drawing from her by and by.

To-day I saw Miss Hall, from Westerham, at a Committee meeting at 3 Hanover Square, and she informed me that Bunny was flourishing. She had heard of him from some one down there who knows him. I hope Mrs. Garnett is well.

With kind remembrances,

Yours,

W. H. HUDSON

24

40 ST. LUKE'S ROAD W. February 15th 1903

DEAR GARNETT

Thanks for your letter which I found here on my return—no, I got it in Winchester on Friday now I remember. I have read the "Academy" paper* since and think it one of your best critical pieces. Of course you are very polite and kind to Lady Gregory, but she will [not] love you all the same. Good for you that she has not the Dr. Anna Kingsford faculty of withering people at a distance by an effort of the will. I hope I shall see you next Tuesday, and Kent Hatch knows—any pine needle in it—how delightful a visit to it would be

* A paper contrasting the qualities of Miss Eleanor Hull's *The "Cuchullin Saga"* and Lady Gregory's *Cuchulain of Muirthemme*. John Murray.

to me. But perhaps I shall finish my search for illustrations and other business pretty soon. Miss Patmore has not yet sent me that mouse, or vole, which she took in hand so long ago, but writes pathetic letters about the difficulty of doing it. Still, I hope to get it in time.

Winchester looked very nice in the fine sunny weather I had, and I went some miles up the Itchen and revisited old familiar places.

Well, you didn't miss very much by not going to the Bird meeting. There was a big crowd and a platform full of orators, but the speeches were a little stodgy. Still, it was a successful meeting and the newspapers have advertised us in a liberal way. Even the "Thunderer" gave us a leading article. I'm glad of your news about your brother at Kew.

With best regards to Mrs. Garnett,

Yours ever,

W. H. HUDSON

25

MARTIN BY SALISBURY *April 17th 1903*

DEAR GARNETT

There will be another Tuesday when I shall not see you as I don't think of returning just yet. The loneliness of this little downland village suits my nerves. We are 3 miles from a telegraph office, 7 miles from a butcher, a doctor and a newspaper, and there is no public house so it is all dark and still after 8 o'clock and everyone goes to bed. The only light is from the stars and the only sound the faint far-off tinkle of sheep-bells. It is a land of great open downs, sheep-walks, and with no sheep on them yet, as it is early in the year and the weather cold, and the sheep are still kept down in the valleys feeding on "turmots" and such things. Peewits,

magpies, rabbits and such creatures are the only people I meet in my long rambles on the hills. In spite of the cold winds and frosts by night the furze is now in full bloom—acres of shining yellow blossoms, and the mossy turf below blue with dog violets. Before coming this way I was at Salisbury and almost lived in the Cathedral for two or three days because it was the only comfortable sheltered place I could find. One warm day we had, and that was on Good Friday, and that day I spent in the prehistoric Cathedral—Stonehenge. I was one night at Fordingbridge and paid a visit to a farmer I know in that neighbourhood, and then came up into this lonely place. When I enquired for a place to stay in people stared at me and smiled at so preposterous a request. But looking about I found a Carter and his wife who took me in. The carter's wages is 12s. a week so you wouldn't think it a very luxurious lodging but you would be mistaken. His "cottage" is an ancient farm-house—timbered and thatched with large rambling rooms, brick floors, big fireplaces, the biggest room, the one I am in, with a wooden ceiling. Besides the old house they have a big old barn, 20 old apple trees, and 6 acres of meadow-land. They keep pigs and 50 or 60 fowls, and the house is beautifully clean inside, linen like snow, and the woman an excellent cook. The reason of it all is that she was in service several years in a great house when being pretty quick and willing to learn she found out how to do things and keep her place nice. Rents here are almost nominal and the landlord who owns the village is very generous. The book-case is over my head, where I am sitting by a big wood fire. It has two very small shelves, and the following works are all it contains : "Pilgrim's Progress," "Uncle Tom's Cabin," Miss Edgeworth's "Helen," "East Lynne," "The Wide Wide World"—which I read once and that was enough—"Science for Boys and Girls" (edited by Kingsley), "Our Village," Waterton's "Wanderings" and Marianne North's "Recollections of a Happy Life"—a curious work to find in such a

place ! Altogether a wonderful little collection of " Best Books "—far better than Lubbock's I imagine.

And now I am on books—did you see last week's " Academy," and did you read the review of Traherne's poems which Dobell has unearthed and published ? And if you did do you agree with the reviewer ? I read it at Salisbury and sent it on to Mrs. Hubbard and this is what she writes to me : " Thanks for the ' Academy,' which I have been reading with more interest than agreement. . . . In bracketing Vaughan with Herbert I should put H. decidedly first. As far as the idea of childhood goes with the three, though Vaughan may get nearer the heart of it than Herbert, yet with both the main point is to use childhood as a luminous background for the black derelictions of after life. Whereas Traherne takes the glory of it, as Blake does, on its own account, with no ulterior motives. He does not utilize it, but triumphs in it. Andrew Marvell had something of that joy and wonder in living, &c." I quite agree with her : I think that first poem in the book—" The Salutation "—one of the most wonderful things ever written.

18th. I was interrupted and couldn't finish last evening, so another day has gone by during which I sat down in a wood and gazed on a splendid red fox, then had a talk with a gamekeeper who is eaten up with magpies. Then I spent an hour in the grand old church of Cranborne, full of monuments to persons of importance in their day and in their parish : and finally I got to a strange out-of-the-world little village called Edmundsham—pronounced Edsham. There is a well on a wide green place there and half the women and all the children were congregated at it, the women with big white sun-bonnets, with great old brown earthenware pitchers to get their water. They were like Ancient Britons and made such a hubbub and gave me so many directions when I asked my way to Damerham—called Dam-ron, that I failed to understand, and went how I could over miles of furzy common and by-lanes until I found Dam-ron, and then on to Martin.

I shall stay here till Tuesday next and then get back to Salisbury, and visit villages on the Wylie river before returning next week.

With love to all.

Yours,

W. H. HUDSON

26

June 3rd 1903

DEAR GARNETT

So much time have I spent in these parts I fear I shall not see Dorset this time. Up till now I have not been about my own business, but running after County Councillors, and they are elusive birds and hard I find it to put salt on their flying tails. I am now going to Salisbury—in fact I'll post this letter there sometime before 10 this evening so that you will not know where it was written in spite of the address being there plain enough. I have had some days at Marlborough, not a bad place, a small old red brick town with a High Street a hundred feet wide. I was in the forest two or three times and a few of the villages near. At Grafton I went to see a nice woman of 55, who was born blind and has a curious history. Her father was an illegitimate son blind from birth, but a fine handsome man, remarkably clever, who built a business in the village and married a nice woman and had 9 children. But all were born blind. They all grew up and lived until about 30 or 35 and then one by one died, except this one—Miss M. Miss M.'s mother, they say, was a woman of a very beautiful character and very religious. When her children were growing up and the family were all happy and healthy and prosperous in spite of so much blindness, an old friend of the wife told her a secret which she had kept in her breast for many years ; it was that she—Mrs. M.—and her husband were children of the same father, this so affected the poor woman's mind that she lost her reason and

died in an asylum. Do you know Melksham? I found it a little town of stone instead of brick like the others, and was reminded that it is near Bath in a stone-producing district. Not far from Melksham is Trowbridge, another nice little old town where I have been twice lately in search of a person I wanted to see. One day while waiting I went to pass an idle hour in the church and when idly gazing at a marble mural tablet on which a dying priest with a Roman nose, surrounded by his sorrowing friends, is sculptured, the name of George Crabbe under it arrested my attention. Yes, it was the poet's monument: he was vicar of Trowbridge 18 years until 1832 when he died. The old verger then told me this story—has it ever been printed? During some repairs in this part of the building one of the workmen broke open Crabbe's grave and carried off the skull, which he sold to a publican in the town for half a crown. He had it for some time, then a Mr. Foley, a wealthy man of the town, hearing about it, got the head and had it reburied, but not with the body. It was placed in a casket made specially for it and buried by itself within the wall just under the tablet. If you will, send me a line addressed to Post Office, Martin, Salisbury.

With kindest regards,

Yours,

W. H. HUDSON

27

MARTIN SALISBURY *June 11th 1903*

MY DEAR GARNETT

I'm here till Tuesday next but shall not be in London soon enough to see you next week. Many thanks for writing: I shall be curious to see your paper* in the "H. Review" and

* "The Nature Books of W. H. Hudson." *Humane Review*, June, 1903.

only fear you have been too generous—that there will be honey on the rim of the cup but not any bitter taste in the liquor. I have a letter from Graham in which he speaks of the “Academy’s” review of my book, and says that “Garnett” probably wrote it. I have written to say that I have not seen it, as I do not get any reviews sent but that *you did not write it.*

Talking of Life-histories*—in the neighbourhood of the village where I visited the blind woman, one very hot day I went over a vast down to the village of Oare, and on the hill top got off and sat in the shade to rest not far from a small lonely cottage. A very old grey woman and a very small boy came out and took a long look at me, and by and by the small boy came and presented me with a spray of Southernwood, and began to prattle telling me incidentally his little life history. He appeared to be one of those whose origin is “wrop in mystery.” A more beautiful little boy I have not seen : he was 6 years old and that old bent woman, he said, was his mother ! His father was “a very old man,” a farm labourer, at Mr. Young’s farm. They kept no pig but they had a yellow cat—only it was lost now. He went to school at Oare—all down hill, and then all up hill to come back. The other small boys plagued him but he always hit back so hard that they were beginning to leave him alone. His sister Susan had 3 children, and Martha two. And he had a brother—a great fat man, who lived in London, but they knew nothing about him. Mother knew, but she wouldn’t tell. His father’s name was “Mr. Jupp.” “And what’s your name ?” I asked. He drew himself up, took a very deep breath and said, “My name is Henry Geoffrey Robert Beach Cawthorn.” It was a fine name, I said, but why was he Cawthorn and his father Jupp ? “I have two fathers,” he said, “Mr. Jupp and Mr. Cawthorn.”

On Sunday evening I had to go to Lyndhurst—some

* This anecdote was expanded years later by Hudson and forms the basis of a paper in *A Traveller in Little Things.*

24 miles from Martin—and did not return until Tuesday afternoon. A funny business took me to that unbeloved place—something to do—odd to say—with a review of my book : but the subject is not worth going into just now. On my way back I crossed that wild lonely street of pine and heath between Cadnam and Godshill where you see no house for a distance of about 7 miles, and where I encountered but two souls. One was a black cock—the first bird of the kind I have seen in Hampshire. He rose before me from the heath at the road side and fled away in proud style. The other was a very tall fine looking old man sitting by the roadside smoking his peaceful pipe in the wilderness. I sat down and had a long talk with him. He was born close by, he told me, at a small village near Fordingbridge. In the sixties he went out to America and 'listed and went through the war ; then got land on the upper Mississippi, and married and worked hard for many years cultivating his land. It was flat marshy land and he worked too hard and had ague and bad health generally. Then he lost his wife and 2 children, and fell himself into consumption. One of his lungs was completely gone. Then he came home to end his days in his old native place among his kindred ; but after 2 years more of suffering began to mend, and finally got perfectly well and strong. Now he works as a Road-mender and roams up and down the roads that cross the heath on an old tricycle with his spade and pick and other tools.

To judge from Blunt's own work—from this "New Pilgrimage," the series of sonnets telling of his own varied life and occupation, or rather amusements, you are perfectly right in what you say of him. He has had "too good a time."

The "Daily News" is the paper I have oftenest seen in the country, and Belloc and Chesterton have been in it a good deal. I am so free from the—*vice* of cleverness myself that I am not very tolerant of it in others. Perhaps here I

Compound for sins I am inclined to
By damning those I have no mind to.

B. amuses me, but irritates as well, and when I read C. I am inclined to exclaim with the young fellow after witnessing the old man's feat of balancing an eel on his nose—"What made you so wonderfully clever?" Perhaps he writes too much—perhaps a reputation for cleverness and paradox is bad for a man—a sort of "heritage of woe" as Lara said.

Pardon this long screed—my excuse must be that it is raining. Poor little David!—but we have all had that sad experience in some degree—to lose our own selves; but to boys sent far from home to public schools for instance, it must sometimes be terrible. Tell him, to console him, that by and by or in some future time he will find it again—that it will seem all the more precious and beautiful then.

With kindest regards to Mrs. Garnett,

Yours ever,

W. H. HUDSON

28

40 ST. LUKE'S ROAD W. May 22nd 1903

DEAR GARNETT

I shall not have the pleasure of seeing you next Tuesday after all, as I have made up my mind to go away to-morrow morning. I'm afraid I *must* be in London on June 18, perhaps a few days sooner, so must get what there is of spring before it is too late. I quite forgot to thank you for the letter I had from you dated May 13, and to reply to your requests—as for biographical notes, of what interest would such things be to any soul on earth! Unless one had some surprising adventures to relate, and I have not any.

I have just had a very pleasant letter from our friend Cockerell who sends me Blunt's book "A New Pilgrimage"

—a gift to me from Blunt, and I am delighted to have it from him as he is a man I respect and admire.

C. says he has got “Hampshire Days” and that Blunt has told him that it is a “better book than Nat. in Downland.” That’s good news. I have just been to Stanford’s to get a Bartholemew’s Map of Dorset ; but I go first to Salisbury where I have to visit two or three persons interested in birds to try and get them to help me in compelling the Wilts County Council to protect the birds of the County. From S. I shall go to stay a few days at Shrewton—a village some miles west of Stonehenge ; and from there I shall visit Avebury I hope and other places, and then go to Dorset for a short visit before returning. Pray that I do not break my neck, and I’ll do the same for you.

Algernon Gissing has sent me his new novel. I fear it will have unsucccess.

I wish I could have been at the Chart this summer day !

With love to all,

Ever,

W. H. HUDSON

29

MARTIN SALISBURY *June 15th 1903*

I shall be gone
from here to-morrow.

DEAR GARNETT

Thanks for your letter, also for “Academy.” The book* is praised too much there, but the same post brings a slight corrective in “The Times” review. It censures me for speaking disrespectfully of naturalists. When I lash out at collec-

* *Hampshire Days*. By W. H. Hudson. Longmans, Green, & Co. 1903.

tors I expect to be hit back, but so far very mild punishments have been administered. It seems to me the Carlyle question is like politics : one must be Froudite or Ante-Froudite, even as one must stick a Tory or Radical label on his forehead. Well I entirely disagree with you, and do not think it a laughing matter. I think Froude did well—far better than any other person could or would have done, and these last painful revelations would never have been made if the Carlyles had not gone too far in their efforts to blacken his memory. It was a bad day for them when they selected Crichton Browne as their advocate ; and it would have been monstrous if a Doctor with his pathological jargon had been allowed to have the last word. And what more dreadful thing could happen to a woman than to find herself wedded to an impotent man ! I mean a normal healthy woman who desires to be a mother. Of course there are abnormal ones who would be pleased to find themselves married to a Ruskin or Carlyle. I remember the case of a distinguished journalist passionately in love with a charming woman who liked him very much and refused him many times, and who at last consented to marry him on the understanding that he would respect her virginity ! He gladly agreed to the condition because he believed that in time she would outgrow that unnatural repugnance. But she didn't, and their married life was a most unhappy one and at last became intolerable. The love had turned to hate and in the end he divorced her. I fancy Carlyle would have done as much. But now we have got this last pamphlet I hope A. C. will rest quiet—but I don't believe he will. The subject is not quite as unsavoury as the one Mrs. Beecher Stow raised over Byron and his wife, but we have all heard about enough of it. That's the one point about which we probably do agree.

Yours,

W. H. HUDSON

STOUR PROVOST GILLINGHAM DORSET *July 19th 1903*

MY DEAR GARNETT

I'm ashamed of myself for not having answered you before, but usually I have sent you half a dozen letters which gave you less trouble to read and were far more interesting than my usual scrawls. And you know that I have not the pen of a ready writer—you can judge from this specimen. Before leaving London I purchased a fountain pen (Swan's) for 9 shillings and fondly imagined that my troubles would end. Alas ! they were only increased and I have at length come to regard my fountain with a concentrated hatred. Here in this small out-of-the-world village there is nothing to be got—not even a pen, and so yesterday I went to a neighbouring village—Marnhull where there is a general shop and purchased this paper and some J pens, the best he had, but I find they are useless—it is like trying to write with a spoon ; so I have gone back to the hated Swan. Marnhull, called Marnle, is by the bye the village where Tess was born, and the country, and the cows and the people are very much like Hardy's description.

The " Pure Drop," the little public where old Durberville boasted of the greatness that was coming to him, is close to the general shop : the shopkeeper, who is the post master also, told me he had not read " Tess," as he never reads books, but he had bought a copy for his boys to read ! It is a nice village with a noble old church full of monuments. But the village I am in now—Stour Provost, one of a group of four " Stours," is far more interesting, being poorer, smaller, more primitive, and prettier. I came here to visit Alfred Hartley, an artist who left London some years ago and came with his wife who is also an artist to live out of the world. They have the prettiest cottage in the place, and make enough

with their pictures to live in comfort, having a very small rent to pay. The parson is an intellectual man, a good musician, and a very good fellow—Capel Cure is his name ; and the parson, and Hartley and the farmers and cottagers are all like members of one family. I have been trying to persuade Mrs. Hartley, who is a clever woman, to put together her experiences in the village and write a book about it. Illustrated of course. It would be a hundred times more interesting than Miss Hayden's "Travels Round Our Village" which had some success two or three years ago.

It happens that my landlady in Silchester—a widow woman—came from this Dorset village where her people are small farmers, so that to me it was like coming among old acquaintances. But I must leave here to-morrow for Sherborne where I shall probably stay a night and then go on to Cerne Abbas and Melcombe Bingham to spend a day with Mr. Bosworth Smith (of Harrow) who has settled there for the rest of his life. Then I shall go to Dorchester for two or three days, and shall probably see T. Hardy. This letter tells you nothing I meant or desired to tell ; but at Dorchester I may have time to write properly, and my address from Wednesday next for a few days will be at the Post Office there.

My kindest remembrances to Mrs. Garnett and David—I wonder how he is getting on at school ?

Yours ever,

W. H. HUDSON

40 ST LUKE'S ROAD W. *July 29th 1903*

DEAR GARNETT

I found your letter at the Dorchester Post Office and ought to have answered it days ago, but didn't feel up to letter writing, or anything in fact. All the time I was there and thereabouts I felt unwell, depressed, tired and saw nothing and did nothing. I walked by Hardy's house two or three times and though I'm quite sure he would have received me kindly I went not into his gate. And at last tired of waiting for a change I gave it up and came back yesterday.

The bad account you gave of Mrs. Garnett's eyes troubled me very much. It always frightens one to hear of that sudden failure of sight—that terrible anger of Nature against someone dear to us, who is blameless and has yet offended the mother of us all. My consolation is to remember that so many of us have suffered in the same way and by taking rest have outlived the danger and recovered full power in the overworked organ. At the age of twenty I nearly went blind thro' reading too much when I was in bad health and the sight in a weak condition. After the attack I suffered for a good many months, if I but looked at a sheet of paper or the page of a book I was seized with acute pains—like needle-stabs—in the eyeballs. In recent years when I again had my eyes bad the symptoms were quite different, but the cause ever the same—the putting too great a strain on a sight which is fairly good, and has never needed glasses but has no staying power.

I had hoped to see you at Duckworth's to-day but must give it up as I am suffering from toothache—I have in fact had that worry most of the time I have been in Dorset, and as I can't go to enquire I wish you would send a line and tell me how Mrs. Garnett's eyes are. Perhaps I shall see her before long.

Many thanks for telling me that you can mentally read my *unwritten* letters : it is a very nice faculty to have, but I'm not sure that the real facts—about Cerne for instance—would come in. Cerne is really the most interesting place I have seen in Dorset. I went to Sherborn thinking to make a stay of a day or two there, but didn't get to like it : the famous Abbey-church failed to attract me ; so I soon left it and went to Yeovil where I spent a night and then went on to Dorchester via Cerne. Yetminster and Ryme Intrinsica are two very ancient pretty villages with old stone houses which I took on my way. The very name of the last is enough to make one go out of his road to see the place, and it is as charming as its name. So many goldfinches were breeding in the yew-trees in the quiet little churchyard that quite a dozen of them came and flitted twittering round me while I sat there on one of the old tombs. But I found goldfinches everywhere in the villages and everywhere I was told by the people that they were getting commoner again all because of the County order which protects them all the year round. I was very glad to think that a few years ago I had a hand in framing that order and strongly insisted on giving this full protection to the goldfinch. But that is talking "shop." A few miles from Yetminster I got out of the stone and sand country with elm-trees and brown roads into the chalk with beech and traveller's joy and white roads. Up and up the road goes to a height of over seven hundred feet, with magnificent views of the surrounding country, and then one comes to the little river Cerne which runs on till it joins the Frome above Dorchester. It is a beautiful region of vast downs and woods, and the villages one sees, or finds if he turn out of the way to look for them in the thick greenery, are Minterne Magna—anciently called Myd-Cerne—then Upcerne, Cerne Abbas, Godmanstone, Nether Cerne and Charminster. Minterne is very beautiful and is the home of the great Digby family—here the fantastic Kenelm Digby was born, I believe. Cerne Abbas is a very ancient place and up to seventy or eighty

years ago had some industries and a market and was a town, but it has now decayed and the population dwindled to about 600, and the old stone houses look like ruins and accord well with the noble but ruinous church and the remains of the Abbey—a gate, or tower, all that is left. Opposite the village, over the river, there is a vast down with the figure of a naked giant cut in it, which has been a puzzle to archæologists these many years. It is generally supposed to be very ancient—prehistoric—and to be a representation of a god. I'll try to give you an idea of the beast on the next page.*

There are many old legends about Cerne—that St. Augustine came here, for instance, and caused the water forming the St. Austins Well—a clear spring just by the Abbey—to flow : also that the natives who were pagans, mocked him and his monks and drove them forth, and as a mark of contempt pelted them with fish's tails which stuck to their robes. The Saint prayed that God would send some sign to turn these people's hearts, and the sign sent was that all the children thereafter were born with tails—fish tails, but some say cows' tails. It is a belief in Cerne to this day that the lineal descendants of the people who mocked the Saint are still born with tails. It is also still believed that to ensure that a child shall be healthy and strong it should be taken soon after birth and bathed in St Austins Well—the spring where the people get their drinking water ; and that the dipping should take place just when the sun-beams touch the water. About the figure of the Giant too there are some old beliefs, one being that a childless woman can be cured of her barrenness by sitting on the figure. But others maintain that to ensure fertility the marriage must be consummated on the figure !

Some writers refuse to believe that the Giant is a prehistoric figure because of the fact that Cerne was a religious house and they think the monks would not have allowed it to remain to keep paganism alive among the people about them.

* Reproduced upon page 193.

It is one of the things we can't settle. The commonest tradition among the people is that in far back times a giant came goodness knows from where to Cerne, and slaughtered and devoured a lot of sheep on the down, and having feasted on mutton to repletion, he went to sleep when the villagers attacked and slew him. Then they carved the figure on the hill to commemorate the deed. It was raining most of the time when I was at Cerne and I did not see as much as I wanted to, but I hoped to return there another time. By the by I can't find anything in Dorset antiquarian writing about the origin of the name—Cerne. It is the name of the stream, and there is a river Cerne in Shropshire. Two other rivers in other parts of England were anciently known by the same name. Edmunds, who wrote about "Names of Places," says it "is from Cierne, a churn, indicating a place where cheese-making was carried on." As a rule churns are used for butter-making : but it is clear that E. is an ass.

I fear I have written too long a letter. With very kind regards,

Yours,

W. H. HUDSON

32

SILCHESTER *Monday evening september 1903*

MY DEAR GARNETT

I wish I could have answered your letter in time for the post here to let you know that I'm still out of town.

I was at Winchester yesterday and leaving very early I called at the Post Office and found a bundle of letters, and yours in it.

I am very glad to hear that Mrs. Garnett has got a new and better verdict on the condition of her sight : it must have come as a very great relief : but to be kept from books and writing for a whole year ! I am glad to remember her

love of gardening. Thanks for what you say about the "Speaker" business. I daresay I can send a paper on some nature subject when I get back. What I had to do here is pretty well done now, so I think of returning one day this week. I have to see the odontologist and the bacteriologist and all the other specialists and so can't keep away longer. When I arrived at Winchester last Saturday I learnt to my sorrow that the friends I had intended seeing were all departed. Most of all I regretted missing Mrs. Bontine, and R. B. C.-G. who was down with her for several days at the end. They had gone up to London a few days ago. Mrs. Creighton—the Bishop of London's widow—who has been occupying the cottage I had three summers ago—had also just left. However, I went to the cottage, tho' it was locked up, and finding a folding chair I set it on the lawn and sat there in solitude for a good hour gazing across the green Itchen valley at the lovely Avington woods beyond. Yesterday, leaving Winchester, I travelled over those tremendous downs towards Petersfield, and regretted my folly in going that way on such a day : the wind blew in mad gusts and made it impossible to stay on the machine when I was on that wide open place 500 feet high. Finally I got to Cheriton—a small old-world place where a great battle was fought in Cromwell's time : and then I went to Broadean to see that pretty primitive village and the old Elizabethan mansion—Woodcote House—close by. I found its owner Sir Seymour Haden at home. He must be nearly 90 now, but he insisted on taking me all over the house and was exceedingly agreeable. What health and strength he must have had ! Only his failing sight prevents him from work now. He is short, but very broad-shouldered and did you ever hear the story of how he took up his brother-in-law, Whistler, and threw him out of his window in Paris in the days of long ago ? Lady Haden is very old too now and quite blind.

With love to all.

Yours always,

W. H. HUDSON

THE PINES SILCHESTER READING December 12th 1903

I have seen Duckworth and
settled with him.

DEAR GARNETT

I left the MS.* for my wife to forward so I daresay you have got it. I had a look at the first few chapters before tying it up and was again struck painfully by the cumbersomeness of the form. Perhaps some little alteration might be made here : the whole of the story should perhaps come more direct from Abel's lips through memory.

All through the story is told in a leisurely way and very minutely, but the introductory chapters seem too slow : the story doesn't move at all, it simply sits still and stews contentedly in its own juice : and it doesn't even stew, or boil, but simmers placidly away, like a saucepot of cocoa-nibs that has all the day before it. This too might be remedied to some extent.

There are I daresay some good points in the book, especially the hero's feeling for nature ; and he being a Venezuelan some might say that it is all wrong. But of course it is a delusion that this feeling is confined to our race and that it is a thing of to-day. It is as strong in some of the old Spanish poets as in some of the modern English poets which show it most, and I have known S. Americans with that passion as strong in them as any Englishman. The fault here is that the hero expresses the feeling too well—in English—to be convincing.

But you can see all this and much besides, better than I can, and I will no further seek its merits to disclose or draw its frailties from their typewritten abode, where they, &c. &c.

I think of staying here about a week longer, and then back to London.

Yours,

W. H. HUDSON

* *Green Mansions.*

40 ST. LUKE'S ROAD W. January 1st 1904

DEAR GARNETT

Many thanks for your sympathetic note of yesterday. I have seen Morley Roberts on his return to-day : he is a good deal cut up at G. G.'s death and doesn't feel much inclined to write anything just yet ; but said he would consider it, or try, if the Editor of the " Speaker " writes to him about it. So I sent a note to Mr. Hammond to tell him.

I read your Magdalen,* as did my wife, then I sent it on to Lucas as you wished me to do. You, being honest yourself breed honesty in others, which is unfortunate, for I should have liked to say something pleasing to you about this bantling which you, I suppose, have helped to bring into the light. But I really can't on account of the above-mentioned honesty. A minor Hardy would I take it be like a minnow or sprat to a 40-pound pike or salmon ; but here, in this case, the comparison would be unjust to Hardy. The salmon is alive, in its river bed, but the sprat is a toy sprat, made of tin or composition, and has no life in it and swims in no water. The characters, with one or two exceptions, are not true. Ivan is not right according to Nature, but she is a quite proper Magdalen like many others of her kind which you read of in novels. Mary Magdalen would have wrung Patton's neck. There may be some truth in Patton's portrait but the artist has not convinced me. The cynical old squire Burford is a man I know quite well—in novels—I never saw a specimen in the flesh. And so on, with all of them—Miss Treaves being the most machine-made of them all—until you come to Zeebel. He for a wonder is natural, but unfortunately deadly dull, and the reader is not spared his talk from the beginning

* *A Magdalen's Husband*. By Vincent Brown. Duckworth & Co. 1904.

to the end of the book. The story seems to me to have no atmosphere : the characters being evolved out of the writer's brains are like a portentous concourse of wooden men and women, and the place where it all passes might be Australia, or Canada or Africa, instead of Sussex. It strikes me that most novels with villagers for characters are very poor, and no doubt you would say and say rightly, that it is because they are written from the outside. But it is quite possible that town people—to those who do not intimately know the village life and feeling—this book may seem all right and even interesting to read. From my point of view it wasn't worth writing.

By the by I haven't returned you your Metchnikoff yet. I will do so on Monday, and that will give me time to look again at some things in it. It is a most repelling book.

Best wishes for 1904 to you all.

Yours ever,

W. H. HUDSON

35

MARTIN SALISBURY *April 3rd 1904*

DEAR GARNETT

I shall not see you on Tuesday as I think of staying on some days here. It is an empty solitary place and the wind blows cold on the bare pale grey-green downs, but it is wholesome. I'm sorry I could not send you the "Purple Land" before coming away : however it doesn't really matter as it is a long time to autumn. I can do nothing in a hurry. I remember poor Gissing years ago writing to know if I believed that we had all eternity before us, or were going to live for ever. I wish he had not been in such a hurry to go out of the world. That reminds me that Madame Gissing is in London on her

way to visit G.'s mother in Wakefield—an unspeakably sad journey for her. I miss her through being out of town but shall probably catch her on her way back to France.

That review of "Vineland" in the "Speaker" is exceedingly well done : she will guess who wrote it I fancy. There's a sort of religious spirit in you, when you discuss a work of art, which is your own. The "Saturday" notices the book this week and is unfavourable too. It also notices "Green Mansions," but says little. Mrs. Cunninghame Graham wrote me a remarkable letter about G. M. a few days ago and said she wants to review the book in the "Saturday," but she is too late for anything of the kind : no paper, I fancy, would admit a second notice. She has just returned from Italy.

I wish when you have nothing better to do you would send me a line here. With kind regards to Mrs. Garnett and Bunny.

Yours ever,

W. H. HUDSON

36

40 ST. LUKE'S ROAD W. Thursday (?) June 1904

DEAR GARNETT

I took this* out last evening meaning to contribute a Preface, but after running through the thing again I concluded that I would spare myself the trouble as I fear it will be of no use to you. I find the first half too poor—just the ordinary kind of story of a young man going abroad and his adventures and love affairs—rather tedious and even twaddly. The second half is better but it isn't enough to make the tale worth republishing unless by some firm that produces a lot of stuff

* "The story of *Ralph Herne*," published in Vol. X of *The Collected Works of W. H. Hudson*. Dent & Sons. 1923.

for the young and has a rather low standard. That's what I candidly think and I daresay you will be of the same opinion.

If you will put the MS. in your bag when you come up next Tuesday I'll call with you at the office after lunch and get it.

Yours,

W. H. HUDSON

37

HUNSTANTON NORFOLK August 17th 1904

DEAR GARNETT

How, I wonder, are you and yours ? I hope Mrs. Garnett has been benefited, and I suppose David has been thoroughly Russianized. I ought to have written to you before—when I came here—for then I could have expected a line from you by now. We came here a week ago and arrived on a pouring wet day and were told that there was not a room to be had in the place. We* tried the hotels and they were full up, but after trudging about in the rain and wind for some hours we “happened” on this cottage, a small old house built of yellow-brown curr-stone, and luckily the people they had had had just left. (3 hads.) The landlady is a poor tall pale gaunt woman with a large nose, very sad looking, with one boy of ten her only family. Her furniture was rather poor and her terms low, so we only took it by the day. But this poor soul is a most interesting human being and we shall stay here all the time. She is the daughter of a farmer near F——, and twelve years ago married a Marston man who took her to his town and was a drunkard and bad fellow in all ways ; so she took her boy and left him and came back to her own country to make her living and her boy's. She is in spite of her ungainly outside a most worthy and even

* This story Hudson amplified later in one of the sketches in *Afoot in England*.

loveable person, and her boy a curiously interesting little fellow, very grave and serious, passionately fond of reading—history, adventure and geology. He possesses Hugh Millar's works, and when his mother takes a day's holiday the two with their dinner in a basket go miles away along the coast and spend the day together on the sands hunting for fossils at that point where there is an old submerged forest, where branches and bits of amber and bones and shells are washed up on the beach. The weather has been very bad since we came, only yesterday we had half a day of calm and sunshine. Monday we spent at Lynn, one of the most charming old towns I have ever seen—one would like to live in it and forget the very name of Progress and be at peace. It is altogether an interesting country, but the Norfolk people are not attractive—they are to my mind the most ungraceful unprepossessing people in England. Here, at Hunstanton, at the height of its short season, the people that fill the place are from Leicester, Bedford, Lincoln and several Midland towns : very few Londoners. They are very nice looking people of Saxon type : the children wonderfully fine-looking, with very light hair, and many of the women large and fine, placid and cow-like for all their blue eyes. They are of course the well-to-do people of the towns they come from, Hunstanton being an expensive place to stay at. You are, I am afraid, more interested in humans than in birds. 'Tis the other way about with me ; but I am not well enough to go the long distances one needs to walk to see the shore birds properly. A few days ago there were a few small flocks of sandpipers, at different points along the beach where we were walking—knots, dunlins and dotterell. We stood some time watching one small flock at a distance of forty yards. I remarked to my wife that they were always very tame when they arrived at this season on the British coast, on their way back from the arctic regions : " If you want to see their wing-markings you must make them fly." So she walked to them and got to within *eight yards* before they rose

up and flew a few yards off and alighted again. There is no shooting yet here, and one would think that man and birds had made peace.

I'm rather ashamed to send you this long screed about nothing. I daresay we shall be a week longer here. I've had no proofs yet.

Kindest regards to Mrs. Garnett and David.

Yours,

W. H. HUDSON

38

40 ST. LUKE'S ROAD W. October 17th 1904

DEAR GARNETT

I didn't see you to day being at Clerkenwell Sessions, not as a prisoner but as Grand Juryman. I have to go again to-morrow to assist to finish our "labours."

I want to see you to ask you if I could sleep at the Cearne on Monday night next should I be down there? Miss Hall asked me to help her entertain her rough boys that evening (from 6 to 7) and I half promised to go. I'm not at all sure that I shall go, but if I do and you will have me at the Cearne I hope David will come over to Westerham and meet me at Little Squerries in the afternoon. His woodcraft and weapons would be guidance and protection in that wilderness dark. We could come up together next morning, I hope. I had a letter from Duckworth the other day to say he hoped to get the "P.L."* on Smith's stalls; also inviting me to show him my old child's story.† Well, I must see it myself first when I have it typewritten, and then I want David to read it.

Goodbye,

W. H. HUDSON

* *The Purple Land.*

† *A Little Boy Lost.*

WELLS SOMERSET *January 29th 1905*

DEAR GARNETT

I was at Bath for a couple of days, then came on here yesterday to revisit old scenes. I came by Shepton Malet and walked from there in the afternoon. A lovely walk, by running water in a pretty deep valley, with fine hills, big masses of stone cropping out, on either side. I have just been to the morning service in the Cathedral—in that curious cut-off-from-the-nave choir which is the most beautiful thing of this kind in England. There was Bishop Kenyon in the pulpit. I had not heard nor seen him for 9 years, and he looked the same as of old—the likeness of a good solid British working man—and not much older, tho' greyer about his mutton-chop whiskers. He preached about the occurrence in St. Petersburg last Sunday, one of the best and most affecting discourses I have ever heard. He knows Russia and gave us from his own knowledge instances of the simple faith, the goodness and loveableness of the Russian peasant. He warned us *not to judge*, and then made the crime of shooting down women and children in the Square before the Winter Palace ten times more horrible than it looked before. I suppose that knowing and loving the Russian people he could not help making his sermon a burning curse on the Czar. I wish you had heard it, and when I say you I mean Constance chiefly. From here I go for a day to Bristol then back to Bath for a day or so, and back to town on Saturday. So I shall not see you on Tuesday. But I have promised Miss Hall to go on Monday and if you will let me go to the Cearne to sleep I shall be grateful: also if David will meet me at the Little Squerries that day about 4 o'clock say. I'm sure to be there by that time. It is a blessed change from noisy Bath to this village-like city, quiet as any rustic village. I forget if you know it.

Goodbye,

THE NELSON HOTEL SALISBURY *Monday April 17th 1905*

DEAR GARNETT

I shall not see you to-morrow as I came here to-day and shall be from home until next week—probably Tuesday. 'Tis very cold here and as I came to cycle I couldn't bring an overcoat. I just now had a look at that Richard Jefferies bust in the Cathedral and dislike it worse than ever. The expressionless face of it! But the poor artist had nothing but a photograph or two to work from. If Watts had painted him we should have had him as he was doubtless seen by some—a very few perhaps—who loved and were in sympathy with him and saw him in his rare best moments. If Whistler had painted him there would have been a good picture but not a face with "The Story of my Heart" in it. But there is a deadly want of humour in Jefferies. Yesterday I laboured at "Bevis" until I dropped to sleep over it, and thought that one chapter of "Huckleberry Finn" was worth more than all that long book. To-morrow should it be fair I intend rambling along the Nadder—one of the five rivers of Salisbury; and hope to visit those prettily-named villages I don't yet know: Burford St. Martin, Compton Chamberlaque, Chilmark, Swallowcliffe, Foothill Bishop, Teffont Magna, Teffont Evias, Forant, and others. Your article on George Moore is capital.

Yours,

W. H. HUDSON

STLCHESTER May 30th 1905

DEAR GARNETT

I must be back in London in a day or two so shall probably see you on Tuesday next.

I've seen the "Speaker" and enjoyed your criticism of the D. T. W. L. c. Guardian of Society immensely. I hope Lady Grey will see it as Miss Robins is her very dear friend and she likes her writer friends to say out what is in them without fear of the Mrs. Grundy public. I was rather disgusted to find my article printed in its originally sloppy state : I altered it a good deal but the revise was not used.

We had it tremendously hot here for a few days : I got up at 6.30 most mornings to get a little walk in the cool time and hear the birds. Tho' the Common is much abused, the Lord of the Manor's agent and the commoners spiting each other by doing all the damage they can to the poor ground, the birds still stick to it. I see and hear nightingales, night-jars, magpies, jays, owls, butcher-birds and twenty other common species. Also some little beasties—water voles, wood mice and such small cattle. Yesterday I was standing quite still for a long time until a squirrel, not able to make me out, came down and advanced with little runs and jumps and tail-flourishing to within two yards of my feet, then after looking at me for some time went off still puzzled as to what I could be. But I've come on no two hedgehogs singing a Romeo and Juliet duet.* Most insectivorous mammals have exceedingly sharp voices, and I should like to know what sound this one makes when not crying out in pain or fear. In a trap he screams like a rabbit but his song-voice is no doubt different. It is never easy to convey an impression of

* Which I had lately heard in a meadow near the Cearne, much to Hudson's jealousy.—E. G.

any unusual natural sound to another, unless when we hear it, it by chance suggests some artificial sound we are familiar with, as for instance the sound of some musical instrument.

The excavations are going on here, but so far nothing very important has turned up. Two houses, or their foundations, have been disclosed, and two pits found in which good things may be hidden.

I hope to find a good number of the drawings for the Child book done when I see McCormick on Sunday.

With love to those at the Cearne.

Yours,

W. H. HUDSON

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40 ST. LUKE'S ROAD W. *sunday June (?) 1905*

MY DEAR GARNETT

I hoped to see you last Tuesday after getting back to London but had to give you up to lunch with Sir Edward and Lady Grey. I don't see them too often and so couldn't refuse. I'm writing now because I've no doubt about next Tuesday : it may not be convenient for me to go to Gerrard Street or to Duckworth's that day. But please let me have a line to say how Mrs. Garnett is as she was ill when I last heard from you. I don't feel well myself, and may be off again one day this week.

I should like you to look at this letter—fortunately with no name and address to it : as it is one of the queerest of the queer letters I have had of late. I want to know how you interpret what he tells—does he mean that he finally went quite off his head and was put away, or what ? I think that poor G. G. suffered horribly at one period of his life in the same way as this man, because of the dreadful religious ideas he

imbibed in the early years the effect of which could not be shaken off. I had a very *long* (and *saner*) letter the other day from a young Australian, a clerk in a Melbourne Counting-house, who got two friends to join him in spending all their week ends in a log hut in a lonely spot 40 miles from the town where they go in for a simple natural life with nature and read Jefferies, Thoreau and my poor books—including the “Purple Land” and “Green Mansions.”

I saw Milsted when I went to No. 3, and I was delighted to learn from him that “A Little Boy Lost” will be modelled on the Freemantle Edition of Grimm’s “Fairy Tales.” I hope you will like McCormick’s drawing.

With remembrances to Constance and David.

Yours ever,

W. H. HUDSON

43

MARTIN SALISBURY *June 11th 1905*

DEAR GARNETT

It almost looks if you were going to be left in a minority of one about Elizabeth Robins, her book*—here is another notice from the “Outlook.” My day was mostly wasted yesterday. I was in Salisbury at one o’clock, and went to the “Goat” to look up the Martin carrier—the only person in the village to put one up, and found his cart but not him. So there I waited in the blazing sun in the crowded street until near 4 o’clock before he turned up. It would have been intolerable but for the singularly interesting faces of the people, mostly villagers up for their Saturday’s marketing. There I saw the best example of the best and most characteristic

* *A Dark Lantern*. Elizabeth Robins. Heinemann. 1905.

Wiltshire downland type I have met with : he was a young shepherd and I was so taken with his appearance that I would have tried to write an article on the subject, but for this most disconcerting book on wasps which is staring me in the face. Mr. Hammond, instigated by you perhaps sent it to me and I brought it down with me, and am looking at it and trying to think thoughts about Wasps. I can't like E. G. and Julius Cæsar do several things at one time. My ophidian brain moves slowly though not surely. I shall be here until the end of the week. Then go to Shrewton or some village in that part—Salisbury plain—for a few days, returning perhaps about the 22nd or 23rd.

It is very peaceful here, and when I go out on to Martin down I find no human creature—only the rabbits and magpies and peewits. The pies chatter at me, the plover wait and cry in fear for their half grown young, which I could catch if I liked, and from a distance comes the many-toned bleatings of the sheep. It is very sweet to be out of the everlasting brain-worrying noises of Westbourne Park. Yesterday when I got up to the highest part of the road and could put my feet up and let my bike run swiftly on for 2 or 3 miles on the downgrade, and had the wide Martin down and the tall village spire among the trees at its foot I had the feeling that I was coming home.

Goodbye,

W. H. H.

P.S. I'm not sure, I believe that Constance agrees with you about Dr. Garth.*

* The bullying hero of *A Dark Lantern*.

12 THE TERRACE ST. IVES CORNWALL November 25th 1905

DEAR GARNETT

I like it very much here in spite of rain, rain, rain. The little old huddled town, the small harbour and fleet of over a hundred fishing boats, going out at sunset and returning at dawn, and the vast congregation of gulls that form a whirlwind of white wings about and among the boats each morning is very fascinating. The men too are very fine, but I don't know them yet. Here in this terrace, between the station and old town, my windows look on to the harbour so I can see it all ; but this morning before it got light the wild excitement of the gulls made me jump up dress in a hurry and go down to look at the scene. I found my friends Hartley and his wife in Carrick Dhu terrace, with a good studio in the old part, where the sea beats on the rocks under their window. There are quite 40 artists here, and to-night is their weekly club meeting : I was invited but declined, as I think one can get too much of picture talk, *I* can at all events. The town is much more pleasant now I should think than in summer when it is like Margate or Yarmouth a pleasure or parasitical place. Now it is inhabited by real people—excepting the artists of course. It has been too wet for walking so I haven't seen the country outside much. I shall stop here a week or perhaps a fortnight. I've just been reading your "Underground Men"* review, and for all you say I don't think it a book I'd care about. It is quite conceivable that such things have happened to other inhabited worlds—green and blue and all coloured suns and worlds, and solid oceans, and wonderful grasses and the rest of it, but without the human interest 'tis all a mere display of fireworks and leaves nothing in the mind. One remembers the Time Machine

* *Underground Men*. By Gabriel Tarde. 1905.

because it has a human interest, otherwise one would forget it as completely as we forget "When the Sleeper Awakes," and "The War of the Worlds" and all the others of that kind. Write if you care to waste a ten minutes that way. I was lucky enough to get into a house of pure Cornish folk : Mother and daughter : the father a mining Engineer away in Alaska—a cold region like M. Tarde's world.

Goodbye with love,

W. H. HUDSON

45

12 THE TERRACE ST. IVES CORNWALL *December 5th 1905*

DEAR GARNETT

I'm here for certain till Friday next, and may stay on a day or two longer. I'm thinking when I depart of sending my bag to Penzance and walking to St. Just, and Land's End on my way, but that would depend on the weather. You talked about that rough country along the coast and I wonder how far you have been that way—to Zennor and Gurnard's Head or where? and whether you know much about it and the people. I should like to know it better, but it all depends on health, weather and all sorts of things. Yesterday I was there all day—or from 9.30 to past 6 in the evening. It is a rude harsh land but attracts me and I daresay anyone who loves wildness. But the people are not rude : they are pleasant and I like them better than the fisher folk. They are I suppose Celtic—why then are they so unlike the Welsh and Irish? Do you know anything about them?

Last evening I fell in with a boy—a small farmer's son—carrying a duck in a basket, and we walked and talked for a couple of miles together. He was like David's brother—in

build, in his face, expression, even his voice—but was about fourteen or fifteen years old.

Ch. L. Graves of the "Spectator" has written to me twice since I came here to try and get me to write for the S. It appears that Cornish is out of it. He had hemorrhage of the lungs on top of other internal troubles and has not written for two or three months and may do no more as he is in a parlous state. Well, I pity him! . . . So passes the glory of this world! Only it doesn't—nothing goes but the dross and stubble and rubbish the vile men desire and clasp, and weep to see torn from them and cast into the destructor.

If you have a couple of minutes to throw away before taking your train you might throw them away on me and say how you are.

Yours,

W. H. HUDSON

46

ST. IVES *February 4th* 1906

DEAR GARNETT

I'm sorry to hear you have had Constance and David both down, and hope they have got over it by now.

The last two days I have been miserably anxious about poor L. F. Her death would be a frightful blow to him; every good he possesses and whatever else the world may have for him would be as much dust and ashes. No two that I have ever known were more like one. But it would be just as dreadful if she were to recover with the loss of something in her character which made her what she was. I could not wish for her to come back from that dark place where she is in such a case.

I must leave here on Tuesday, for Penzance where I shall stay the night and then go to St. Just for a day or so, unless

I find it a good place to stay a week in. There is a great tin mine there which runs far under the sea—almost the only tin mine still worked in West Cornwall. But tin mining is all at once coming back, and during the last 2 or 3 days I have met with men digging out a poor tin stone which pays them to send to the crushing places as the metal has gone up in price so much.

I got the "Speaker" as my paper was in it and so had the pleasure of reading your review of Mrs. Mann.* It is I daresay a pretty good book and you are very kind and gentle to her but it is clear to me that you don't approve of her taking such very exceptional creatures as the Jaggerds for her rustic characters. She is no doubt following such angels as Hardy, but then that was the blot on Hardy's best book, or almost the best.

I was rather surprised on reading my St. Ives article to find that I was capable of being very dull ; but I trust the other articles will be a little brighter. And poor C. J. Cornish is dead too—killed himself at 47 by too hard work for nothing since he was very well off and could have thrown up his mastership of St. Paul's and at least two of the papers he contributed largely to, and he would still have had plenty to do. His wife had a good fortune of her own, and they had but one child.

Hueffer must be getting impatient with the "Tribune" as they haven't put him in yet : but it is a good paper all the same and I can't do without it—we get it here at 4.30 p.m.

My address on Wednesday will be P.O. Penzance ; after that I don't know. With love to all.

Yours,

W. H. HUDSON

* *Rose at Honeypot*. By Mary E. Mann. Methuen & Co. 1906.

40 ST. LUKE'S ROAD W. April 15th 1906

MY DEAR GARNETT

I was deeply grieved at the news when I opened my paper yesterday morning. I know it is your nature to feel deeply and I sympathise with you and yours in this new sorrow. It was a great surprise to me as I did not know of any ill-health, and the continued vigour and freshness of Dr. Garnett's work gave the impression that he had a good many diligent useful years before him. Strange as death usually seems to us, it now seems hardly strange I should be writing such a letter as this to you, since my days just now are with the dead and thoughts of death. I have been going through an immense mass of letters before destroying them—all the letters I had written to a friend lately dead which have been returned to me ; and a second lot—a 12 or 14 years correspondence—from another old friend who does not wish to leave this labour to others at her death. Then, just now, comes a request for the loan of all the letters I have received from Lady Grey. They have all been destroyed—all but 20 or 30 which have survived by chance. Another old friend of mine who wrote the wisest wittiest letters—all gone too—died a few days ago—old Dr. Cunningham Geikie. It seems to me that if I had preserved all the letters *worth keeping* since I came to England they would now number not less than 20,000. And if I, a person out of the world so to speak, who knows so few people, get so many letters, what must the number be in the case of a person in Dr. Garnett's position ! Probably there is a vast accumulation of letters and papers to be examined by his executors ; and that great labour will perhaps fall on you.

I think it probable you are in Hampstead and will address you there.

Yours,

W. H. HUDSON

40 ST. LUKE'S ROAD W. May 10th 1906

DEAR GARNETT

It looks as if we are not fated to meet at present. I had hoped to be back in Cornwall before now and had engaged to be at a meeting for school-children at Penzance on this very day, but last week influenza got hold of me and I have been abed six days now, but I'm mending and may be able to get up and out for a little to-morrow. I daresay you heard at No. 3 that I was there looking for you in the afternoon : I was feeling bad then and so did not wait long. A day or two before that I had finished reading Doughty's first volume* and was just going to write to tell you what I felt about it when I saw your article in the "Speaker" and that naturally shut me up. It would have been an impertinence if I had sent you my views on the subject after reading that tremendous pronouncement in the course of which you make a furious assault on the critics and reply by anticipation to what you imagine the blockheads will say. It was going too far, and that often happens when a man writes with an angry pen. But why angry? Something in yourself, I suppose—a small still voice which warned you that things are not always what they seem, that the very elect are sometimes deceived and that no one is or can be infallible. Perhaps when He or the small voice found you would not listen, he increased your anger by remarking as a parting shot you would be quite in order in likening your newly discovered poet to Milton and Dante. That is just what the critic who has lost his head invariably does.

I suppose it always strikes one as something strange and unaccountable that men who in matters literary are almost

* *The Dawn in Britain.* By Charles M. Doughty. Duckworth & Co. 1906.

invariably our safe guides should on occasions go wildly wrong. But it is a long subject—Mr. Sully, if he took it up, could easily fill a second volume of “ Illusions ” with it.

Do you remember the story of Walt Whitman’s rise to fame and how Emerson first blew a loud blast to proclaim the new genius ? Now in spite of being a poet himself and a man with a splendid critical faculty, he was not the person to appraise Whitman’s work ; for you can see in his own poems that his verse is a mixture of prose and poetry and that he does not clearly distinguish one from the other. He found eventually that he had said too much about Whitman and wisely held his tongue. Not so Swinburne. He raised Whitman to the highest rank among the heaven-born geniuses, and after cooling down and discovering that he had made a big mistake—that he had been under an illusion—he was in such a rage with himself that he could not rest until he had poured out about 30 pages of frantic abuse of the “ Leaves of Grass ” in the “ 19th Century ” ! Those readers of Whitman who had laughed at Swinburne’s extravagant praise laughed again—or were too disgusted to laugh—when that diatribe appeared.

You will not follow A. C. S. but rather Emerson about your “ genius ” : but if I could live a few years longer and find you anxious to forget all about the “ Dawn in Britain ” I should try in my poor way to convince you that it is not without merits.—“ And now,” etc. etc.

By the by, when you go up to the office I should like it if you will tell D. and M. that I went two or three times to Unwin and offered him £15 to give up his rights in that book, but he wouldn’t, so I’ve consented to its publication by him.

Yours ever,

W. H. HUDSON

40 ST. LUKE'S ROAD W. May 14th, 1906

DEAR GARNETT

Festina lente ! I haven't started reading Vol. 2 yet, but if I get away as I hope to-morrow morning and have seven hours and a half in a railway carriage I may get well into it. And, oddly enough as you may imagine, I am looking forward with pleasure to it. Your letter doesn't quite absolve you. I suspected that you were replying to some person's strictures in the review but it does not appear that they were made in print. "When a work so much off the beaten track appears the only thing for its champion to do is"—*wait* till somebody attacks it and *then* let him roll up his shirt sleeves and carry the war into the enemy's camp. So far as I know war had not been declared, nor even contemplated. Then about Whitman you say the only thing for a writer who doesn't admit his greatness is to quarrel over what poetry is, and what it ought to be. Do you know what it is ? Of course all the definitions in the world cannot enable a man who does not possess an infallible test in himself to know it when he sees it. He *may* know it, but without the touchstone he is apt to mistake verse couched in a fine lofty poetry simulating diction and decorated with poetic imagery for the real thing. His very superior poetry may be plain prose "cut up." If you haven't got the test you haven't got it, and there's no more to be said ; and one may be allowed to doubt of anyone having it until he proves the contrary, not in one instance only, but in many, since anyone may hit on the truth occasionally by chance. You remember the Ass in Iriarte's Literary Fables, and how he found the flute left "by chance" by the shepherd in the grass, and how smiling and sniffing at it "by chance" he blew in it and caused it to emit a very pleasant musical note—"by chance." Who says I'm not a musician ! exclaimed the animal proudly kicking up his heels. I knew

Iriarte in Spanish, but Southey translated him very well, and if it is one of his forgotten things it's a great pity. But I'm wandering. About what is poetry, one sees that the poets themselves are sometimes at fault. Witness Wordsworth who was capable in his great moments of soaring higher than most inspired writers, and yet he very frequently falls into prose—rather dull prose too—and hasn't the faintest idea that he is doing so. Now when "the good Lucas" wrote of *The Dawn in Britain*, "It isn't poetry at all : it's simply prose cut up," he was wrong because there certainly is poetry, some of it very noble poetry in the book—Vol. I—but he would have been right if he had said that there is a good deal of prose in it. Much more prose than poetry, alas ! The opening, Book I, is fine poetry up to p. 5, then the intense glow fails and fades and eventually goes out in prose. But at intervals inspiration comes and lifts him above himself and makes his work shine again. For instance, the episode of *Curwen*, p. 30, is fine poetry, and would be one of the most impressive things in the book if one did not feel that it was borrowed. Not the story but the spirit of it. *The Book of Ruth* inspired it.

What wicked hap, alas!
 Arms brother's hand against a brother's life ?
 Why trouble ye these bowels, again : my sons ?
 Could Britain not contain what this one womb ?
 Would I had carried you till now therein, &c. &c.

He has saturated himself with the spirit of the story of *Ruth*, which was made real to him by his life in the Arabian tents. Again, in Book II, p. 81, that is a noble poetic passage beginning :

"Through valleys, murk and low, amid sharp rocks."

And so on, it glows and sinks and goes out and reappears again, as in Book III in the story of *Crispin* and the water nymph which no one could mistake for prose if he know what poetry is.

And what about the rest—is it simply prose ? Well, if we can't define poetry, and seeing how ridiculously Wordsworth

failed I don't think we can—not very well at all events, though Coleridge had a good try at it,—we can at least describe how it effects us and get at its nature in that way. When verse fails to warm me, does not excite and elevate me like wine, when it leaves me cold, I say “This isn't poetry,” and I am so sure of myself that if the wisest man and best critic in the world talked for 24 hours to persuade me that it was, I should merely say that either he didn't know poetry or that something in the work had touched some secret cord in his mind, that his feeling had got the better of his judgments and that he was under a delusion.

The effect of a great deal of the verse in “The Dawn in Britain” on me is similar to that of a tapestry on which armies and battles and processions and gorgeous ceremonies are represented. It is very fine, very splendid, I admire the artistry, but it produces no illusion as a fine painting does in which the figures glow with mimic life and passion. It describes passion all the time but is passionless itself and does not warm me.*

* I am able to add here some interesting criticism of *The Dawn in Britain* scrawled on some sheets of notepaper in Hudson's hand and inserted by him, and found after his death, in the copy of the Epic which I had given him. The pages, one of which is indecipherable, form apparently the draft of a letter to Edward Thomas :—

“I don't wonder that you had Doughty's people with you among the old oaks and beeches at Savernake. I envy you a winter in Savernake forest and you were better alone or with no company but the phantom people of Doughty. There is something Ossian-like in his people—vast and stormy and of tremendous power and not so clearly adumbrated. They are like gigantic demi-gods seen in a mist at a distance, and one does not look for characterization. His greatest men, his favourites, from Brennus to Caradoc are very much alike and his lesser men are slight versions of the greater ones. It struck me when I read Volumes 3 and 4 that when the two first had found a publisher—the others had not been done or not finished—that the whole work had been planned and sketched out—but only the first two in portions written—and that he then completed them in a hurry. That is how I accounted for the falling off in the third and fourth volumes in all the least interesting portions. In places he falls into the baldest prose—sometimes into rhyming couplets—and I think he would have altered this if he had not done

That's enough for to-night. It's getting late, and what am I to say about your offer to dedicate the play to me? I can only say that it strikes me that I'm about the last person you ought to think of in such a connection. The play may be very good indeed, but I'm so wholly out of it in literature of that order, and you have so many friends who are really in the world of letters—not beyond the frontier. You had better think it over before you settle on me.

I haven't seen your Mrs. H. W. review yet, but at Paddington Station will try to get the "Speaker" to-morrow. Nor have I seen the "Daily News" review—if it is out.

I hope to come back before the end of May.

Good night, with love to all.

Yours, W. H. HUDSON

it in a hurry and sent it off without revision. In 6.21. Vol. 6 he again falls into a most un-Doughty-like style—a sort of jog-trot rhythm in the episode of Herfryd and Rosmerta when they go to minister to Kowain. Here is a sample—

Seldwhiles they find in some forsaken cote,
To lodge ; or aught there they might bake and *eat*
And forth ere day, in dread to be bewrayed.
They so long gone, then, on way-weary *feet*
That all their little wallet-store is spent,
Are hips and berries of wild woad their *meat*.

Another blemish is a cold harsh puritanism which appears most in the long story of Cartismandua and Vellocatus beginning I forget where and ending in Vol. 5. Their sin was that of Tristram and Isolde and of Launcelot and Guenevere and one loves and pities them, but he would make us abhor his two lovers.

And yet perhaps the finest thing in the whole work is the account of Caractacus in Vol. 5—his awful gloom and madness when he rushes on and hacks the trees as if they were Roman warriors. He is a great figure, a more [indecipherable] madness than King Lear I think. I only wish that in the last Volume he had made more of Boudicca's rebellion. It is very fine but she is such a tremendous figure in our imagination that one looks for more inspiration in her death and the pyre episode and the Roman conquest. I wish someone would now make a complete study of the poem and give a full view of it in a quarterly [?] article. I hope you will do it."

PAUL'S COMMERCIAL HOTEL PENZANCE May 17th 1906

DEAR GARNETT

I shall be on and off in this part for a few days. The weather is simply hateful here—bitterly cold and wet. I was at Cape Cornwall yesterday and the cold wind from the Atlantic was rather more than I could stand after my long spell of illness. If it turns warm to-morrow I shall go for a couple of days' ramble among the hills Zennor way between this and St. Ives. I had a nasty experience at starting, as there was a breakdown on the Metropolitan when I tried to get to Paddington, and all the cabs were snapped up by people travelling to the City before I could get one. However one good fellow gave me a lift in his cab to Paddington and I got there just in time to catch the train to Penzance—all seats already taken in it. I had to wedge myself in somehow and journeyed in misery to Bristol after which there were seats. At Exeter I got the "Speaker" and read your article* with much enjoyment. Ages ago when I read "Rob. Elsmere" with great labour I vowed never to choke myself with another of that woman's ill-cooked moral puddings, and I've kept my vow! I see that poor dear Elinor Glyn is getting a rough handling from some of the reviewers. Well, you are safe there as you are not the champion she needs to fight her fight.

Yours ever,

W. H. HUDSON

* On *Fenwick's Career*, by Mrs. Humphrey Ward. 1906.

PAUL'S COMMERCIAL HOTEL PENZANCE May 1906

DEAR GARNETT

Thanks for writing. But what am I to say of your offer of yet two more vols of "The Dawn in Britain"? I do want to read it very much—when I return—and perhaps it would be best to let the subject be till then—till I see you. Oddly enough I had just seen the "Chronicle" review of it by Thomas who does not let the grass grow under his feet. I wonder if you are going to do it for the slow-moving, sluggish Saturday? I hope so. What a time that H. H. takes over articles: he asked me for *all* my articles on Cornwall and has kept one (corrected) for several weeks! I suppose you saw Maeterlinck's brutal attack on Tolstoy in reference to his Shakespeare articles. It seemed to me damned bad taste, for though we admire Maeterlinck and worship Shakespeare with him, and as he does, we remember what Tolstoy has done and do not want to hear him denounced in *that* way. It were better to keep silence in such a case. Once upon a time Ben Jonson in his declining years wrote a play which, if I remember rightly, was declined, whereupon he published it with an introduction denouncing the critics and managers and the public as a lot of dull asses. When they turned round and abused him a writer of the day rebuked them and thought it unseemly, and so ought Maeterlinck to be rebuked, and you were perhaps the best person to have done it. The cold here is too severe for one to do anything—I can't hold the pen with my stiff fingers and so can't write of my rambles and adventures now.

With remembrances to Constance and David.

Yours ever,

W. H. HUDSON

12 THE TERRACE ST. IVES CORNWALL June 29th(?) 1906

DEAR GARNETT

I'm back at the old place you see. I was a few days at Penzance but could not settle in that part. St. Ives climate suits me best, and I shall stay about a week longer I think.

Can you tell me who Sisley's Limited are? They call themselves

SISLEY'S LIMITED,
THE LIBRARY PRESS,
9 DUKE ST.,
CHARING CROSS ROAD.

The Cameo Classics.
Children's ,,
The World's Novels.

They are writing to a friend of mine here an artist, inviting him "to send them" his work—etchings. Perhaps they will know at your place whether they are people to be trusted or not.

I hope you are all well. Here it is very mild and wet, or misty. I went for a long walk among the hills this morning, but after going about three miles gave it up in disgust, as the mist increased to rain, and I could see nothing in it.

I had a long quite legible letter from Graham the other day in which he praises you for being the only friend who does sometimes write to him—but he does not tell me what he is doing.

I'm doing nothing or very little. It is an indolent interval at St. Ives. The herring season over, the mackerel not yet begun, and the gulls away to make their own living. Yesterday at a Primitive Methodist Chapel I heard a red hot woman preach. She is a missionary, from near the Lizard—very successful in bringing souls to—Somebody. "Many converted this time?" was asked at the chapel a day or two ago, and the answer was—"No, not one this time—you see, we've

been too busy with the elections." Well, they are over now, thanks be ! Here it was simply a mad holiday—a wild carnival—a day when the sober and religious as well as everybody else could with a clear conscience break out, and shout and dance and wave torches and blow on brass horns and make clowns of themselves generally. It was not political feeling at all—they all did it and the losers were as gay and happy as the winners.

Love to all.

Yours,

W. H. HUDSON

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16 BELLAIRS TERRACE ST. IVES CORNWALL *January 13th 1907*

DEAR GARNETT

I'm at this address till Thursday next, and then if I can will be at a farm near Gurnard's Head for a few days. But letters are sent on every day from 40 St. Luke's Road. It is mild with some fine weather down here and I have (been) rambling about a good deal but all after birds and other inferior creatures instead of man. What I want to ask you—Do you know that Mr. Harry Brooke, the Rajah's younger son in England, is going to start a threepenny literary journal to appear fortnightly—they write to me about it and ask me to contribute. I have ventured to say that the price will be fatal. The illustrations—it is to be illustrated—will be fatal, and that the fortnightly will be fatal. However it doesn't matter what I think, I tell them to consult you about it, and if possible to get you to contribute and to find clever writers among your friends. Of course if you don't want to have anything to do with it that will be easily settled. . . . When I came down a fellow I know got into the same compartment

who is a great artist and a very great talker, and he talked steadily to me from 10.30 until 5.15 when we got down here. I was never so tired in my life.

With love to all.

Yours,

W. H. HUDSON

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ZENNOR ST. IVES CORNWALL *January 28th 1907*

DEAR GARNETT

I haven't heard more about the "Planet," except that Maurice Baring was assisting Brooke in it. The B's are an exceedingly numerous brood and I don't know who Maurice is.

I spent a week at St. Ives, then went to a small farm on this coast. The Rector of Phillock and Hayle and Gwillion (an important living) has some property near Zennor and gave me a letter to one of his tenants asking him to take me in. They were rather amazed and dismayed at having to take a stranger in but submitted and I had a rather amusing time. It was like going back to the estancia life in the wild uncivilized districts of the pampas. After five days—I thought that quite enough—I left, but they were used to me by that time and wanted me to stay on. Here I'm known, having stayed last Spring at Zennor. The landlady is accustomed to either an artist or a writer in her rooms all the year round. I forget how many famous classics have been produced in the room I'm writing in—"When it was Dark" is one. Once you told me you had a high opinion of that writer, Ranger Gull—Guy Thorne.* It seems impossible—his books strike me as the most detestable I have ever read. It's a great

* Hudson's memory was at fault. What I had told him was that Ranger Gull had written an historical novel which was not so bad as his others and so throughout.—E. G.

joy to me that the frost is over here, tho' not with you perhaps. Here there is a concentrated population of birds in winter—those who cannot cross to other lands, or don't want to, and follow the land to the last place where it is rough but mild, and so they manage to get through the cold months without quitting England. So when a big frost does come there is no escape for them, and it was pitiful during our three hard days to see their sufferings. I fed some at my window—much to the amazement of the villagers who think birds were made to be destroyed, not fed—and as I'm in the very centre of it all, the village spring where the cows drink and the people get their water, just before my window, I had the geese, dogs, cats, pigs, all coming round to pick up what crusts and scraps they could. On Thursday I'm leaving here, and shall I fancy go either to Land's End or Porthgevarra (St. Leven) for a week.

“Uncle Willie” aged 82 has just passed the window wearing his blue smock, with a long staff in his hand, driving the cows out after milking.

Yours ever,

W. H. HUDSON

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THE LIZARD *March 26th 1907*

MY DEAR GARNETT

I am alas ! a hater of letter-writing : but that may be a blessing to you ; it has at all events saved you the task of reading several letters since I came into these parts. I came here from Penzance on Saturday thinking to stay a week or ten days, but find it very bleak and dreary in this weather, and shall probably go back to Penzance and then somewhere else, if not to London, in a couple of days. It is horribly cold—the coldest weather known for years—and I'm tired of fighting with the wind. Here I've just read “A Corner of Old Cornwall,” by Mrs. John Bonham and wonder if you

have come across it. It is a series of sketches of people and their doings on a farm some sixty or seventy years ago, and it strikes me as the best and truest picture of Cornish life I have seen. The "corner" is the little village of Landewednack close to the Lizard, and Mrs. Bonham (whose name was José) described I believe her own people. There's another Cornish writer you must know—J. H. Pearce, whose novels of Cornish life, or some of them, were published by Heinemann, the one I am reading, "Ezekiel's Sin," in 1898, and I fancy you were with H. at that date. His other books were "Esther Pentreath," "Eli's Daughter" and "Inconsequent Lives." He also did a volume of sketches—"Drolls from Shadowland." There's so much that is good and true to life and at the same time so much that is false in this writer I'd very much like to know what you thought of him when you read him—if you ever did. Ezekiel is a crabber, in a cove which is very well described, who fishes up a corpse, takes the gold he finds on it and then lets it sink again, and is haunted by remorse ever after. One doesn't believe in the remorse : it hardly seems natural. A parson said to me the other day—"These men in the fishing cove are what they were a hundred years ago—I shall despise them as long as the world lasts." All that because his fourteen years' experience of them has convinced him that they are still wreckers in heart. But this parson is not a native ; he's a Devonian but looks like an Anglo-Saxon, and has a slow dull mind : at all events he has not discovered that to be a wrecker is not to have a criminal mind—that wrecking to a Cornishman simply means to take the gifts the gods send you. Oddly enough the vilest examples of the wrecking spirit one can find on this coast are in a little cove where the people are the most pleasing in their manner and conversation, and I believe as moral and religious as any. Well, it is a long question.

I hope Constance and David are very well.

Yours,

W. H. HUDSON

40 ST. LUKE'S ROAD W. April 3rd 1907

MY DEAR GARNETT

From the book coming* to me from Duckworth's I suppose you were up this week : I wish I had known it. I was in the City on business yesterday forenoon and would have come round to Henrietta Street if I had thought you were there. I read the first chapter of " A Lost Word " this afternoon and it struck me as being a man's book, yet you had told me I'm pretty sure that it was by a *Miss* Underhill ! It is I see by Evelyn Underhill and Evelyn is a man's name. I know a dry-as-dust solicitor who has Evelyn for Christian name. I can't remember seeing your review of the book, but it strikes me as good with a good many things to criticize in it. He puts a good deal of thought in it and the thought is not always right. Your pencil marks will make it more interesting to read. Very many thanks. I'm thinking of going to the Land's End on Friday next but shall not stay very long this time, and when I'm back I hope to go and have a look at that village of Hueffer's—*Aldington*—but I did not greatly desire to go to Kent for a cottage.

By the way I wonder if Gissing's new book " Dreams of Robert Ussher " has come to you ? G. has just sent it me, but I haven't looked at it yet.

Goodbye with love to all

Yours,

W. H. HUDSON

* *A Lost Word*. By [Miss] Evelyn Underhill. Heinemann. 1907.

PENZANCE *April 8th* 1907

DEAR GARNETT

I quite forgot when I last saw you to tell you the rainbow tulips all came up. I saw all because when I put them in on Christmas morning I counted the bulbs carefully and made their number 105. Well, on Saturday morning last I got up very early to prepare for my journey to Penzance and went out to have a look at them and counted the plants, just ready to send up their flower spikes and found there were 107 !—two more than were planted.

Saturday was a long day of travel and adventures and now I've done with this town for the present and am going to Land's End to-morrow for a week or perhaps longer. My address will be

Zennor,
Land's End,
Cornwall,

but don't trouble to write unless you want to say something. I sent you a "M. Post" with an article of mine three or four days ago. Well, I've had several letters from strangers about it, one from a lady with a title who has compelled me to break in her case my stern determination not to reveal the identity of the old squire. But she knew him from her girlhood and was convinced in spite of disguises that I had described her old friend, and tells me that his early career had been a most romantic one although he had a most unromantic figure : that his ungracious manner and solitariness was partly the result of an intense shyness. But the poor lady had never heard of the sonnets and wants me to help her to find a copy ! One might as well look for a MS. of "Sanconrothon" or "Mercurius Trismegistus." To-day going to St. Just I had the quaintest most amusing little fellow of 7 as a travelling companion. When I asked him where he lived, or where his

home was, he said solemnly he had no home and had never had one. It turned out that he was a member of a party of strolling players who have just taken a hall at St. Just to give a series of dramatic performances. And this little mite appears on the stage in some of the sensational plays ! But here my paper ends, so goodbye—

W. H. HUDSON

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ZENNOR LAND'S END *June 5th 1907*

MY DEAR GARNETT

Thanks for your kind unforgetfulness in remembering me. I'm well enough, as well as usual, and I was in London at Whitsuntide when of course nobody was about, and so I saw no one, and having done my business came down again. I have also been going to write to you this long time ; but I've had as it were indirect tidings of you. I don't read much in these parts but I always manage by hook or by crook to get the " Nation " for the pleasure and profit I get from reading your wise message to the world. I also read Massingham sometimes (with a grin). What do *you* think of this Government of yours now—of all the latest, and not that only but, of all the better things, the higher aspirations, the " charities and serious contemplations " which the wicked Tories are without but which flourish mightily among those attained to power by means of—well, terminological inexactitudes ? Poor M. ! There is a note of disillusionment in his last article.

The weather here is abominable—sea fog, wind, rain, bitter cold, day after day, so I have to have a fire when I'm in, and there's not very much pleasure in being out. Yesterday I was out rambling all day and a dense fog possessed the earth from sunrise to sunset. I daresay I shall have to

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go up in a week or so and will see you then. I don't particularly want to read any of the books you've reviewed lately ; but I wanted to see what you would say of Charles Marriott's "Remnant."* If you have had it, I have missed that number of the "Nation"—I've missed one or two since I first came down.

I'm thinking of going to Penzance to-morrow, and then, unless I go up sooner than I want to, to town, to Zennor for a few days.

Kindest regards to Mrs. Garnett and David.

Yours ever,

W. H. HUDSON

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PENZANCE August 16th 1907

DEAR GARNETT

Yours was forwarded to me here. I'm glad you liked the cigars, and I had meant to lunch at the Mont Blanc last Tuesday but came to Cornwall for a week instead. I had been wanting to come just to see for once the *Erica vagans* which must be in flower now at the Lizard, and then Morley Roberts said he was coming and asked me to join him on Tuesday at Paddington and I made up my mind to do so in a hurry. On the platform I encountered the Galsworthys starting to the West intending to walk from Minehead. They were waiting for the 10.30 train (my train) to Bristol. I informed them that it was a non-stop train to Plymouth, and didn't go near Bristol, and on enquiry they found that the Bristol train had just started. So they had to stay on the platform waiting for another train. We left fine weather behind us and plunged into rain and fog in Devon, and

* *The Remnant*. By Charles Marriott. London, 1907.

excepting yesterday it has continued wet all the time. Yesterday I walked from Gurnard's Head to St. Ives visiting Zennor on the way : the whole aspect of the country has changed since I was here in June. The blossoming furze was the chief thing then ; now the bracken prevails and covers everything—including the furze. Roberts is at the Scillies now but returns to-morrow and we may then go to the Lizard for a day or two before returning to London. I think I shall go back on Tuesday or Wednesday. The whole country swarms with people on their holidays, and much do I pity the poor wretches trying to enjoy themselves. By the by, I sent a card to Thomas on Monday last to say I could not be at Gerrard St. He was probably away from Berryfield Cottage all the time. With love to all.

Yours,

W. H. HUDSON

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16 BELLAIRS TERRACE ST. IVES CORNWALL

November 25th 1907

DEAR GARNETT

If you see Mr. Bishop of the Square Club will you kindly let him know I'm out of London for the present and shall not be back for the first Wednesday in December. I must stay till about Dec. 20 I fancy, until next Saturday here, then three or four days at Zennor, then at the Land's End. As usual it is raining all the time here. I came on Saturday, and leaving my carriage and my dull Cornish fellow travellers soon after leaving Paddington I found another with only two passengers in it, a marvellously sharp, nice, clever-looking man, well dressed, and a wild street Arab looking ill-dressed boy. He turned out to be a plain-clothes policeman taking a noted

little rascal known at Battersea as " Little Dick Turpin " to put him on a training ship at Saltash. The man and boy (who were fast friends) were both delightful. He gave me an account of the boy's escapades, at which the little fellow (aged 11) chuckled delightedly. Eventually I found that this was the cunning policeman who captured the 10 medical students attempting to destroy the Brown Dog monuments. At Devonport we parted, and I gave the little rascal a box of sweets intended for my sweetheart Ivy at Land's End—a good little girl. I shall have to explain it all to her and try to make her believe the sweets will convert the naughty little boy to be a good one. Yours ever.—Can I do anything for you here ?

W. H. HUDSON

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January 1st 1908

DEAR GARNETT

Just a line to say I'm not ill, though not robust, but too much occupied to get out much, so could not go to see you yesterday. I sign, as you wish. Alas ! poor man, what hope is there for him ? *

Goodbye now—hope to see you soon, with good wishes to all for 1908.

Yrs.,

W. H. HUDSON

* Petition of Dramatists and Men of Letters against the office of the Dramatic Censorship and Mr. Redford the Censor's activities.

40 ST. LUKE'S ROAD W. *January 10th 1908*

DEAR GARNETT

Pardon me for not writing sooner to thank you for the Arabia,* but I had hoped to see you on Tuesday or Wednesday. I had a cold and thought it best not to venture out in bad weather. I have read only the first two or three chapters, but this little I greatly enjoyed : I must wait awhile until I can finish the work I have in hand. Your "Nation" articles I never miss and was rather alarmed for you when I read your last—how could you dare to say such things of two such men?

I'm sending you a box of cigars and hope you'll like them. Also a little lavender to Constance with best wishes for this new year.

Perhaps I shall see you on Tuesday next.

Ever yours,

W. H. HUDSON

AQUAE SALIS *February 16th 1908*

DEAR GARNETT

"Just a line" from this sacred place to say I shall probably not see you on Tuesday as I think of staying at Wells a day or two before going up, and that will keep me till about Thursday. As soon as I get back I'll post that chapter you have kindly promised to read about the imaginative faculty in the Cornish people. I can't re-write it but want any suggestion you may like to make.

This sheet is spread on the "Nation," and I wonder if you have anything in it? There's no novel of the week. I don't much care for these papers of J. G.—There's a certain

* *Wanderings in Arabia Deserts.* By Charles M. Doughty. Abridged by Edward Garnett. 2 vols. Duckworth & Co. 1908.

something of sermonizing about them, and I prefer him when he conceals that side of his mind. But I haven't read *this* sermon or whatever it is yet. I've been strolling about in the rain—now it is fine again—picking up old threads, or memories, and looking for people I knew. Those I particularly wished to see are gone—I don't mean dead—but gone to some other part of this earth. To go and see them elsewhere would be a mistake—they were part of Bath—my Bath, which is a rather peculiar place with a smell and feel and colour and shape and above all an expression which makes it unlike all other places on earth. The loss of one of the people I knew and liked or disliked and loved in the past hurts me as much as it would to see a portion of the West front of the Abbey pulled down, or Ralph Allen's house gone or some such change. I have had an hour this morning wallowing in hot water and sweating in blankets, and as it is now 10.30 I must make up my mind whether to go to the morning service or for a walk. I want to do both and am like the donkey between two bundles of hay.

Goodbye, with love to Constance and David.

W. H. HUDSON

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40 ST. LUKE'S ROAD W. *saturday* February (?) 1908

DEAR GARNETT

This is the chapter*—the “dryest in the book” my typist says. You might bring it with you to the Mont Blanc on Tuesday. Are you, I wonder, going to be present at the Deputation? †—well, I suppose so, and if I have the time I'll be there too.

So long,

W. H. HUDSON

* Chapter XIII, “The Poetic Spirit,” in *The Land's End*.

† Deputation of Dramatists, etc., to the Home Secretary to urge the abolition of the office of the Censorship of Plays.

March 29th 1908

DEAR GARNETT

Thanks for the Ticket—I may be able to go one day this week. No, I haven't given the Mont Blanc a wide berth, as you say, but have been ill on every Tuesday these many weeks past. Occasionally on other days, when I have felt well I have been there to lunch and have met Hueffer and two or three other habitués. I may see you to-morrow. However, I've read you always in the "Nation," and being a sportsman of sorts myself I always admire your neat way of taking your captured rabbits from the net and often tickling them with a little caress or two before snapping their necks and putting them in your bag. How many do you slay each year? It is a good object lesson to peep into Mudie's just now when he is selling out the year's accumulations of read and dead novels of the year. Thousands, millions, myriads—good 6s. books from 4d. to a shilling! Books published and *lauded* less than a year ago. Do you not see that the cheap form *must come* and that it will kill oceans of trash with the circulating libraries?

Well—goodbye,

W. H. HUDSON

WANTAGE May 4th 1908

DEAR GARNETT

I shall miss seeing you to-morrow as I am going to ramble about this part for a little. But I find no nice place to buy here—cottages for sale are few and the prices impossible. I may go on to Malmsbury from here, and then over the Wiltshire border to Tetbury and Cirencester. Do you know

a book "Letters from Queer Street" recently published? I saw it on the table in a house I was visiting at a few days ago in London, and was told something about the Author, a young Australian, who went to the S. African War, then came to England to make his fortune in literature. He wrote "Tommy Cornstalk" and "An Outlander in England." . . . They don't know what his life is now. I wanted to know if you know his first books and if they are any good. My friends preferred him to Lawson in "When (or while) the Billy Boils"—but I can't quite accept their judgments.

A strangely quiet rather ugly old-world little town this is where Alfred was born—his statue stands in the market place before my window. By the by, Miss Hayden of "Travels Round Our Village" lives close by, and I may see her tomorrow if in the mood. I think that book was the best thing of its kind since "Our Village," which I like and which you no doubt despise. A sad letter just reaches me from W. W., who has been since boyhood at war with his father and is now filled with grief and (something like) remorse on his father's death. The good qualities that were wavering in the balance before now suddenly come out and—oh if we could but live our lives over again and have a little consideration. I was at "Die Walküre" on Friday evening and saw Duckworth there. With remembrances to Constance and David.

Ever yours,

W. H. HUDSON

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NEAR FARM HOLME THORNHAM NORFOLK *August 13th 1908*

DEAR GARNETT

You see that I am still alive and now in East Anglia, which I don't care for very much except in late autumn when the wild geese come to these parts. I don't think the Norfolk

folk quite as bad as some of our "realistic" fictionists make them, but I can never like them as much as I do the people of Wilts, Dorset and Somerset—the West generally. There is less of sweetness in their blood and they are less pleasant in their manners. I came first to Hunstanton with my wife, then I cycled about looking for a place to stay at in some small village on or near the coast. At Holme I went to look at the church—a very big old church in a very small village, and while there studying the monuments I heard some splay-footed or weak-legged person floundering and flopping over the gravel outside, and by and by an ancient person who turned out to be the Vicar came in and began to show me about. His age was 80, but he was full of life, and when I told him I was out in quest of a place to stay at he dragged me off to half the houses in the village and eventually with his help I got rooms at this address—a farm-house in the village with green marsh-land at the back, and a line of sand hills close to the sea half a mile away. I daresay we shall stay a fortnight here. I wonder if you are going away anywhere? I read your article on Stanley Weyman and almost pitied the man, though I can't read his books, at the remorseless way in which you cut him up. I sometimes think your mildness and gentleness is on the surface; that underneath you have a fierce spirit and take as much pleasure in an exercise of this kind as any warlike man in charging an enemy sword in hand.

I hope I shall be able to do a little work in this quiet place now I begin to feel a little better.

Yours ever,

W. H. HUDSON

2 THE MEADOW WEST STREET CROMER August 16th 1908

DEAR GARNETT

Thank you for the picture of an owl which I received before I came down here and should have thanked you for before. I take it to be a Greenland or great snowy owl, and it seems well done, only it has been stuck on to the mounting board with bad paste or carelessly as it is all in lumps. I shall try to take it off and have it framed. You say of the artist Griset that he was a clever devil, and I wonder if you know anything about him more than what strikes you in the picture?

I shall be here until about the 1st of September I think, with my wife; then I'll try to get away for a ramble on my bike. Cromer is just a parasitic town, pure and simple, without a little fishing quarter, and all its people are now busy over their harvest—their visitors, and are in a way dehumanized. 'Tis the last place I'd think of coming to for my own pleasure. But it is in its appearance and surroundings better than other pleasure towns. A sea on which it looks and high fine cliffs and long stretch of yellow sand at low water with a thousand bare-legged children at the old everlasting game with the sea. *They*, the children, are beautiful and their old joy is beautiful to see and only the men with the mentally diseased liver, whom we call pessimists, would feel sad at the sight, sad because these are not the children of last year and of a thousand years past, but are new to the sands and in another year will be gone to be succeeded by others and others till there is no more any sea or any child or even an earth.

Goodbye,

W. H. HUDSON

HOLME-NEXT-THE-SEA KING'S LYNN *August 19th 1908*

DEAR GARNETT

Glad to have a letter from you. Yes, my wife is with me, but as we return to London on Monday next we shall not see you here and it would be too late to send a novel. If you have a good one to lend me you might send it to St. Luke's Road, as we want to go away for a few more days somewhere South when we are back. She has been reading two novels here—one by Beatrice Harraden, poor, and Mason's "The Philanderers." The last I've just read with but languid interest. An imitation of Henry James! But it is all about people of the class which I detest more every day—the upper class—the people who devote their time and talents to their own selfish enjoyment—motorists, golfers, sportsmen. An old woman I met yesterday gathering samphire interested me more than all the people in Mason's book, and a great deal more than all the important people here. The people are not altogether nice and are mostly dishonest and untruthful, but I don't wholly dislike them. I'm very glad about Thomas*—I suppose it will be for some time—a year or so at any rate, and it will bring good material in his way.

Two sisters, friends of mine, have been staying at Woodbridge and find it a very delightful spot. Some day I may get there as I should like to see Aldborough for old Crabbe his sake. It's nice here too, but there's one drawback—the golfers have possession of a long stretch of the sandhill between the village and the sea. You must keep to the deep sandy road or rut to go to the beach, and then you are warned with yells to stand still until someone makes his stroke. When they wave their sticks and shout at me I shout back—

* Edward Thomas had secured some appointment under Government which his bad health soon forced him to resign.

“What the hell are these swine yelling about” and go slowly on and chance being hit. Then if one goes by the high road he is covered with clouds of dust from the loathsome motor-cars—they appear to swarm here. How long will the slaves of England endure this brutality I wonder?

Goodbye,

W. H. HUDSON

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HORNINGSHAM WILTS *April 20th 1909*

DEAR GARNETT

Many thanks for sending me “*The Feud*,”* and I congratulate you on so fine a piece of work. It is wonderfully vivid and powerful, and I hope we shall have a chance of seeing it in London before very long. Helga and Bue are both splendid characters, and one wonders that so peaceful a son of civilization as yourself could find it in you to make these bloody-minded barbarians so fearfully real.

I’ve been rambling on my bicycle all day and am too late to post letters at this village this evening. Harningsham is just outside one of the gates of Longleat Park, a very noble domain. It is a beautiful village, but I shall not stay in it as it is all under the shadow of the great tree called the Marquis of Bath, and I like the villages best that have no lord over them; so I shall go away in quest of some other spot to stay at to-morrow. But I have to go up to London about the 27th so shall perhaps get a sight of you next week at the Mont Blanc or somewhere.

Yours ever,

W. H. HUDSON

* *The Feud*. A Play in Three Acts. By Edward Garnett. A. H. Bullen. 1909. Produced April, 1909, at the Gaiety Theatre, Manchester, by Miss Horniman’s Company.

HINDON SALISBURY *June 9th* 1909

DEAR GARNETT

Thanks for papers : I fear I shall not be able to see your play after all as I don't see how I can get up to London in time. I don't want to be in London at all if I can help it during the summer months, but shall have to go for 2 or 3 days about the first of July, and had made all my arrangements to that end. I've written to my wife to try and take her friends if she can manage it either on Friday or next week, and I shall look with interest to see what the "D.T." will say of "The Feud." Well, all good wishes for a success in the metropolis.

I suppose you are in town so will address this to Henrietta Street.

Yours ever,

W. H. HUDSON

40 ST. LUKE'S ROAD W. *July 6th* 1909

DEAR GARNETT

I was sorry to miss you yesterday at the Mont Blanc and suppose you didn't come up—perhaps you are far away taking a holiday. I came up for a very few days and am going down to Wilts again to-morrow, where I expect to make progress with a book on that part ; but what I'm going to do with it when it is finished I don't know yet. I have told H. that if he won't put money in it for illustrating, etc. it would be useless. However, that doesn't interest you—you are not a

publisher, thank the gods, or we should not have been friends.

I'm sending you a copy of "Afoot in England," which has some chapters you've never seen. I wonder what you are doing and how you are? There was Blyth, Berlyn, and some others at the restaurant but no one had seen you very lately. For over two months down in the two or three small villages I stayed at I saw no literary paper and *no book*. On the other hand I got acquainted with every person in Hindon, where I spent most of the time—a village of 400 inhabitants—and I found it a very pleasant, restful sort of existence.

I wish I could have seen you to know about the play and how it went at the Coronet.

Give my love to Constance and David, please.

Yours ever,

W. H. HUDSON

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BERESFORD HOUSE WELLS-NEXT-THE-SEA *October 3rd 1910*

DEAR GARNETT

I shall not see you to-morrow as I'm down here for a while—probably a fortnight. So the Villa-villa is your place of meeting still! I quite thought you were all going to give it up months ago. It is wonderfully quiet here—no motor hoots and no sound is heard except "the prayerful crowing of the cock," and the clanging of the geese when they come in of an afternoon. It is very restful and the weather is very good at present. I hope it will get me round as I haven't been well this long time past.

As for reviews,* I've only seen one in "The Times"—

* *A Shepherd's Life*. By W. H. Hudson. Hutchinson. 1901.

sensible and sober, and one far too laudatory in the "Morning Post."

Well, I'll go and see you when I'm back.

Yours affectionately,

W. H. HUDSON

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WELLS NORFOLK *October 11th* 1910

DEAR GARNETT

Thanks for your letter—you said so much in praise of "A Shepherd's Life" I had to wait to get cool before replying. But you are always too generous to your friends and (I can't help thinking) especially to me. The reason of it is that you are to some extent under an illusion. A man is so much better than his books! Take the best thing you have done—don't you feel how little of all the best in you it contains—and that little how poorly expressed? I don't like even to look at a book of mine after it is finished. I suppose when you know a man intimately and have an affection for him you get into the way of expecting to find him—something worthy of him—in his book. Hence the illusion. I think Sully explains it all in his book "Illusion." But that's enough about the book. I really can't remember all that cliff between Sidmouth and Beer, 'tis a long way, and though I've walked from one to the other I went by the road I imagine, and only saw the cliff from Branscombe to Beer and Seaton. But what a difference between that coast and this with its vast level seaflats, with the low yellow and grey line of sand dunes to separate sea and land—the sea itself nothing but a vast level sheet of sand at low tide! Its fascination for me is its solitariness and the wild birds. I thought these things would help me in my present state of health and depression, but I don't find

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very much benefit yet. Some days I feel as well and happy as I have ever felt, then without rhyme or reason my heart begins to jump and dance and I am down again. Well, I must put up with it and "wait and see" a few days longer, but I shall be obliged to go back on Monday next, if not sooner, and so shall probably see you next Tuesday.

I hope David will have no fresh set back as of course until his wound heals thoroughly it is a rather dangerous time.

With love to him and Constance.

Yours ever,

W. H. HUDSON

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40 ST. LUKE'S ROAD W. *February 26th 1911*

MY DEAR GARNETT

Pardon delay in sending on my signature to petition.* I wanted to see E. first. I lunched with him on Friday and then had a long talk in which I said everything about Davies and his poetic work—the prose work does not appeal to me. He recalled that he had heard all about Davies some time ago—that a friend had given him the books, but he had never found time to look at them. He says he can get no interval of leisure to read anything except state papers at present. But I am sure from what he said about it that he will consider the opinions of the petitioners in a sympathetic spirit and will recommend that a small pension be given. He says that as the entire sum available is small, one who, like Davies, wants

* A petition extensively signed by literary men to secure W. H. Davies a Civil List pension. One eminent Professor, however, trumping the advice given to Keats to "go back to his gallipots," declined his support on the ground:—"I do not think that letters would have suffered any eminent loss if he [W. H. D.] had kept clear of them and earned an honest livelihood by manual labour."

but little stands a fair chance of getting something. Or words to that effect. It is a pity the professional critics have been so extravagant in their praise : it really spoils one's pleasure in reading Davies to think of what they have allowed themselves to say. "As good as Blake" is one thing. That makes one fly to the other extreme, and I would say, Open Blake where you like, or Crashaw, or any one of a dozen poets of the same genus, and take the first line your eyes light on and it will outweigh the entire work of Davies. That is the effect of extravagant laudation.

But, thank Heaven ! I am sane enough not to be carried away with such vagaries of criticism.

I'm going to post your Irish book* to-morrow morning,—many thanks for the loan. I've read it two or three times over and wish he would do more translations from that store. My wife hasn't finished "Fortuna Chance"† yet—a very good book. I am writing to E. to say another word about Davies.

Yours,

W. H. HUDSON

I *may* be going down to the country to-morrow—if so shall not see you on Tuesday.

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40 ST. LUKE'S ROAD W. March 11th 1911

DEAR GARNETT

As you wanted my opinion about "The Patrician"‡ I must give it in black and white—an unpleasant necessity as I shall probably be out of London on Tuesday next. An exceedingly

* *Ancient Irish Poetry*. Translated by Kuno Meyer. Constable. 1910.

† *Fortuna Chance*. By James Prior. Constable. 1901.

‡ *The Patrician*. By John Galsworthy. Heinemann. 1911.

interesting book, in some ways the best G. has produced. There is more beautiful writing in it than in any of the others. But though it pleases very much it does not wholly satisfy. It is not so *real* as the "Man of Property." Lord and Lady Vallays, Bertie, Lady Casterley and old Clifton the butler are excellent *as types*, and think and speak and act exactly as you expect them to do—in fact "they can do no other." As to the more important personages I can only suppose that certain feelings, beliefs and speculative and critical ideas of the author have been personified and made to appear as Miltown, Courtier and Audrey. *These* think, speak and act as the author makes them. By the by Mrs. Noel doesn't speak at all ; one can't help feeling that the author of her being was afraid to let her open her lips lest any faint illusion he had succeeded in producing in the reader's mind should be dissipated and lost. Another thing : in spite of the interest and charm of the book and the many beautiful passages, especially in the second part, it gives one a sense of great effort of striving and straining after something very high, very perfect. . . . I really admire the book immensely, but as you know I'm strongly reluctant to praise anything, good or not.

I saw Blunt on Thursday—he is just up from Sussex and in splendid health.

C. Graham writes to me from Rome where he went on a visit to his mother who was not well.

I hope to go down to Hampshire to-morrow but will probably be back in eight or ten days.

Yours,

W. H. HUDSON

40 ST. LUKE'S ROAD W. *August 8th 1911*

DEAR GARNETT

If you should find A. Gissing's new novel "One Ash" I wish you would read it : if it is not at the "Nation" and you would like to see it I can send you my copy. It is a rather squalid and painful story of village life, quite wonderfully real. It is to my mind by far the best thing he has done, and the reason of his success is partly, I fancy, because he has not introduced a single person of a "better class"—gentlemen and ladies and refined and artistic persons—the beings he always fails to make convincing. Another thing is that in this book he has been able to throw off the Gissingian style which you "couldn't abear" and which I didn't like. Here it is as simple and straightforward as one likes. The one and only fault I find with the book is that too many big events come at the end. But there is no happy ending—for which one is grateful.

It was frightfully hot to-day, 88° in the shade, and I feared you would not be at the Mont Blanc, so didn't go. I may go away to the sea somewhere with my wife on Saturday. She isn't well and wants a change ; so do I.

Good night,

W. H. HUDSON

I had a letter from Cun. Graham giving an account of the death of his old S. American horse "Pampa" which he has ridden for twenty years in Rotten Row. He says he never felt anything more. He is at Washington House, Basil St., S.W.

40 ST. LUKE'S ROAD W. November 12th 1911

DEAR GARNETT

I'm here at home and have been here all the time except for two visits in August and September to Littlehampton, and have not seen you because my wife has been seriously ill this three months past and more, and I have had to be with her all the time. First neuritis, then gastric catarrh and of course her nerves are in a bad state. Probably she will be an invalid for the winter now as half a dozen doctors have not made her well yet.

I am sorry to hear that Thomas has broken down again—why will he work so incessantly and so furiously? But why put such a question? We are all immortal—until something floors us to our great astonishment. I'll write to him if I can—it is hard for me these days even to scribble a note to a friend (and I have just had to write a solemn note to Reginald Smith declining an invitation to dine! Reginald S. and A.C.B. and half a dozen others of their sort—think of the delight of it!) Nor do I read anything. Hammond has sent me his "Village Labourer" book, but it is not very light reading. I see you have brought out Hueffer's "Critical Attitude." Judging from his "Ancient Lights" it strikes me that *his* critical attitude is peculiar—like the ways of the heathen Chinese. He says that "Christina Rossetti is the one satisfying poet of the nineteenth century"! . . . I saw Masfield a day or two ago—met him close by and was pleased to hear he is writing other narrative poems—I like that form of literature (for him) better than "Streets of To-day" and "Multitude and Solitude." The novel is not everything—whatever you and Wells may say—especially for those who are not made to write it.

Well, don't let us quarrel about it. I'll try to see you one day, though I doubt if I shall be your way on Tuesday.

Goodbye,

W. H. HUDSON

40 ST. LUKE'S ROAD W. *November 28th 1911*

DEAR GARNETT

I'm sorry I could not get out to-day. I am not very well and am still anxious about my wife, who appears to be sinking into a condition of permanent invalidism. If there should be any improvement by and by I hope to take her away to some suitable spot on the South Coast.

Very many thanks for the novel—"Tante." I saw several glowing notices of it—but the only one I have found that is absolutely right is your review in the "Nation." If Mrs. de Selincourt, or Miss Sedgwick, is not herself a Tante greedy for nothing but outrageous flattery she should be everlastingly grateful to you. It is a fine book and carries one on in spite of its faults to a fine finish in the good old-fashioned way (which is not nature's as a rule) with a little too much of the long arm to bring it all right at last. But the chief and often exasperating fault is that the two chief and very admirably drawn characters, Tante and Karen, are almost spoilt by being over-elaborated. She dwells on Tante's pose until one revolts and says No, it is incredible that such a woman should not have been seen through or that she should not have been dogged by the scandal of husband and lover killing themselves through her for the rest of her life. And so in the case of Karen : her faith in her adoration of her guardian came at last to look like sheer stupidity. Mrs. Wolcott is perhaps the most satisfactory character in the book solely because she is not so important and her qualities not insisted on in the same way. As to Gregory Jardine, he is a woman's man and hero, evolved from the author's inner consciousness and not a living man at all. However, many women writers have been great in spite of inability to draw a convincing portrait of a man.

I have read little of late, but as soon as I have time I must

get several new things—one published by your firm, Sturge Moore's poem. But after his tragedy, "Mariamne," I began to think that there is not much to expect from him : he has reached the highest point he could ever rise to and is now I fancy coming quietly down.

Goodbye,

W. H. HUDSON

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40 ST. LUKE'S ROAD W. *Friday December 22nd 1911*

MY DEAR GARNETT

A line to say I've posted a 50 box of Serenas to you to-day, and hope you'll like them. We go on the same, though there's a slight improvement the last few days.

All good luck be with you and a happy 1912.

Yours with affection,

W. H. H.

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40 ST. LUKE'S ROAD W. *January 21st 1912*

DEAR GARNETT

Yes, I'm still here marking time, as you say, with no prospect of getting out of London very soon. I've got some addresses of decent places in Bournemouth, but my wife is not up to it yet. She is better in some ways, able to walk to the other room and sit up through the day, but the gastric and nerves trouble does not abate. One effect of her nervous condition is that she dislikes to be left by me even for a couple of hours.

About Wednesday, it is odd that for the first time in several months I half thought of taking that day off to see *Ædipus* in the afternoon—the only chance I shall have. But if my wife feels better on Tuesday I hope to get round to Gerrard Street at luncheon time. I'm doing no work, and am thinking of nothing but the coming row, wishing to God I was twenty years younger. I don't particularly love the Ulstermen's character, but I should like to be with them if it comes to shooting. However, perhaps there'll be no fight. Massingham and the others of his party who are shrieking at their leaders just now on account of foreign policy may presently make the discovery that Ulster is nearer to us than Persia and Tripoli and Morocco. Their cry should be "hands off," in Ireland as well as in Asia and Africa.

I wonder who reviewed Lascelles Abercrombie in the "Nation"; I agreed with every word of his article. I wish you had mentioned Thomas—I wonder how and where he is. I've seen nothing from his hand in the "Chronicle" this long time.

Well, there'll be much news to hear I daresay if I can get round on Tuesday next.

Yours ever,

W. H. HUDSON

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40 ST. LUKE'S ROAD W. May 21st 1912

DEAR GARNETT

I wasn't well last Tuesday and am not well to-day so shall not see you. I should like to see your "*Celestina*,"* but don't send tickets—if I am well enough I will go to-morrow and will get a seat somewhere in the house. I don't suppose

* *The Spanish Lovers*. An Adaptation by E. G. of *La Celestina*, produced at the Little Theatre, May 22, 1912, by B. Iden Payne.

it will be overcrowded, and I doubt much if I shall be well enough to attempt it.

I am suffering from incessant headache and am weak as water. I hope the play will be successful.

Yours,

W. H. HUDSON

I was glad to see the review of "The Brothers Karamazof" in the "Observer" and the tribute to the translator. I am going to get the book. They are selling it very cheap.

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40 ST. LUKE'S ROAD W. *June 4th 1912*

DEAR GARNETT

Sorry I can't see you to-day—better, but am engaged all day so can't get there.

Wonder if you read Richard Curle's book of stories—"Shadows Out of the Crowd." He sent me a copy and I think it rather original and good.

Yours with affection,

W. H. HUDSON

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40 ST. LUKE'S ROAD W. *February 11th 1913*

MY DEAR GARNETT

I had hoped to see you this week to thank you in person for the Stonehenge you sent me. What demon possesses you to be always giving? But you couldn't have made me a more acceptable present: Stonehenge, in the early summer's

morning, appeals to me more than any place builded by man. It has a unique *expression*, and it is mainly expression that gives a scene, an object, its æsthetic value. But the expression is of the individual since it is born of association, consequently it is different in everyone of us and is private and incommunicable. As the poet says—"We receive but what we give." Happily for me the artist has caught and conveyed the expression the old temple at that early hour has for me.

I haven't been away : I was just about to start for Cornwall after Christmas when my wife fell ill of bronchitis and lung inflammation, followed by neuritis, and is only just recovering, though still very feeble. I can't go away now until she is well, which may not be for a month yet.

I have just read a rather striking book, "The Fate of Empires," by my friend Dr. Arthur Hubbard. He had discussed it with me and I didn't think he would make much of the subject ; but it is rather startling and makes a good guess at that mysterious canker which always bring civilizations to the dust. We are certainly in for destruction according to his showing. That's all *my* news : I'm out of the world. Masfield has done well in his last—so far as the Shropshire part of his poem goes : the S. American part is all imagined, painted from London—too far away—and false.

I hope to see you soon—you can't come over and see me to-morrow, I suppose ?

With love,

W. H. HUDSON

40 ST. LUKE'S ROAD W. *March 2nd 1913*

DEAR GARNETT

Thanks for your kind note and offer of assistance, but I think I'm getting over this bad attack as my Doctor Robinson gave me a drug—the "opium of the heart"—to allay the trouble. No doubt the state of my mouth, due to having some teeth pulled out, brought me down to that low state as I couldn't eat properly for weeks.

I shall get away before long I hope either to Worthing or somewhere.

Galsworthy has again succeeded in making a hit about cruelties in "The Times"; there's a good deal in the Press about his letters. Well, *one* of the barbarities he cries out against—the Plumage business—will be stopped very soon I think. The second reading of the Bill will come on in a month or so, and the only fear is that the Ulster fight may begin any time within a month from now, and once a shot is fired farewell to any legislation this session.

Goodbye,

W. H. HUDSON

40 ST. LUKE'S ROAD W. *Tuesday March 25th 1913*

DEAR GARNETT

I'm sorry I can't go to lunch there to-day—I have to lunch at home as my wife is in such a nervous condition that she couldn't take a meal if I am not with her.

I go out later, and can call on you at about three, if you will let me know where I can find you—Villa-villa, or

Henrietta St., or where. Just write on enclosed card. It would save you the journey and give me my day's outing.

I am much distressed at what you say about E. T.* I had an [word indecipherable] letter from him a short time back when he was away.

Yours,

Say 3 to 3.20.

W. H. HUDSON

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3 WEST VIEW PELHAM ROAD SEAFORD *June 4th* 1913

DEAR GARNETT

I managed to bring my wife down here on Monday last and she stood the journey very well, but the three days we have had in the place has not so far improved her health. She is very weak and in the same desponding frame of mind.

I have known this place many years, as I used to stay here when rambling on the downs. I liked Seaford to sleep in and it was my custom to go out very early in the morning to spend a long day among the hills, towards Eastbourne, or Lewes, or Jevington and return in the evening. Now, as I am not able to leave my wife until a friend comes down to be with her, I see too much of Seaford. It is a naked shadeless or treeless town with too much new building, and the people I used to know have mostly vanished. Perhaps by and by I shall be able to get out on the downs where I suppose all things are as they were. They look the same at all events when I look round at them from this distance with my binocular and see the old familiar slopes with patches of golden gorse. My own health is pretty much as usual : I'm a poor walker now I fear ; but my heart has been better

* About the time Edward Thomas had fallen into a low state of health and his worldly circumstances were giving him great anxiety.

the last few months. I'm sorry you didn't get the book* to review. All the reviews I have seen so far have been highly favourable—they give the book too much praise. Just before coming away I re-read Williams' Wiltshire book† and liked much of it very well : if the new book is a better one it must be good. I am not yet doing any writing and don't think I shall be able to do anything while this anxiety continues.

You had your say, I see, about the Laureateship. Well, now poor old Austin is dead and gone people will perhaps begin to find out that he was not such a poor poet after all.

With love,

Yours ever,

W. H. HUDSON

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3 WEST VIEW SEAFORD June 10th 1913

DEAR GARNETT

Thanks for the parcel and your letter. No don't send anything—novels or any books : my wife doesn't read, and can't read, as even to attempt it sets her brain reeling. That's the greatest trouble, as she was a constant reader before her illness, and now has no way at all to occupy her time. As for a bicycle, I have a very good one, a fourteen-guinea Sunbeam, but did not bring it down as I knew I couldn't use it at present.

Our friend can't come down now as her daughter is just preparing to go over for a six-month tour in S. Africa and she is obliged to get her ready.

Lulham, if I remember, wrote some poetry about the downs—I believe I have his book. Lawrence is all right no doubt, only I've had so much to do with flesh that his insistence on

**Adventures Among Birds.*

† *A Wiltshire Village*, by Alfred Williams. Duckworth, 1912.

it—its warmth or hotness, its colour, the curves of it, and the kisses pressed on it with hot, wet lips—goes against me. By and by when he grows out of this stage, which often comes to a young man who has repressed all his sexual instincts from religious motives, until he gets himself suddenly free of them, he may do some really good work.

Alas ! poor George Wyndham ! His death is a blow to me—he was so full of life, he had such an intensity of life, that when I last met him I felt the profoundest pity and contempt for myself, as I saw myself at his side. Well, nobody knows the whole secret of his life—or of any life for that matter : but I don't believe he cared very much for the setback he received in his political career—I think that life itself was more to him than anything else—fame, offices or what not.

Thanks for “ Women of the Country ”*—but who Mrs. P. or B. or Bone is I don't know. Unless it stands for Mrs. Bone—well, if so it is sure to be good. The wind raves like the devil all day and night—and has done so for five days. I can hardly stand up against it myself, and of course can't get my wife out in it.

Yours ever,

W. H. HUDSON

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THISTLE GROVE FURZE PLATT MAIDENHEAD

August 24th 1913

DEAR GARNETT

I thought you knew I came here after our return from Seaford—we came about seven weeks ago. It is a poor spot for a naturalist, but all we wanted was a house with a garden and lawn where my wife could be out of doors all the time in good weather as the doctor ordered, and we found it here.

* *Women of the Country*. By Gertrude Bone. Duckworth & Co., 1913.

It is away from the river near the Thicket, between Maidenhead and Cookham Dean. Still, the progress is very very slow, and we shall have to go back to London about the end of this week, and go a little later to Bournemouth or some other mild spot for the autumn and winter. I have done practically no work here, and have read little except a few of Strindberg's weary books and the weary book about him by Miss Lind-af-Hageby. I know Miss Lind and have the deepest respect for her noble courage when she fought the whole gang of vivisectors and their millionaire patron. But her writing has no charm and her labour is wasted over such a subject as Strindberg, and the book is bad, although all the critics praised it. I daresay the publishers say, "That's what they are for." Having done with Strindberg I'm just now reading the heavy German Sudermann in his much-talked-of and censored book, "Song of Songs." I saw your "Contemporary" article on Mrs. Bone's book: I'm perfectly certain the book would have stood a better chance if it had been brought out with a title of a different order—one which the religious public would have understood. They have not found out Mrs. Bone yet, otherwise the two former books would have probably had a big sale.

Of course I would like that coast* if only for its bird life, but I see no prospect of getting to places I want to visit any more. My health doesn't allow me to hope for anything now. I've got my bicycle here and take runs about the open spaces—the Thicket principally, which is perhaps the best common in England, as it extends over two miles and is mostly a perfect wilderness and tangle of thorn and bramble, interspersed with big trees. Our Bird Society is now trying to get it made a protected area, and I think we'll succeed this time. We tried before.

Yours affectionately,

W. H. HUDSON

* The North Pembrokeshire coast.

40 ST. LUKE'S ROAD W. *November 2nd 1913*

DEAR GARNETT

Pardon me for not writing before, after you called : I was sorry to miss you and wish you had dropped a line to say you were coming. As to health, I think I'm about as bad as one can be without being down altogether. Still I hope to stay on to see the flame of war brighten in this peace-rotten land. It will look very beautiful to many watchers and have a wonderful purifying effect. However, you are a man of peace I think. My wife was a little better when you called—she has been rather bad since, the doctor coming in once more. I don't know that we'll be able to get away after all.

I forgot to say apropos of books when I last wrote that I had just read your favourite author's "Sons and Lovers." A very good book indeed except in that portion where he relapses into the old sty—the neck-sucking and wallowing-in-sweating flesh. It is like an obsession, a madness, but he may outlive it as so many other writers have done. Paul and his mother are extraordinarily vivid and live in one's mind like people one has known. Only they seem more real than most of the human beings one meets. . . .

God knows when I shall see you again unless you come here some afternoon. I hope you are all well.

With affection,

W. H. HUDSON

40 ST. LUKE'S ROAD W. November 21st 1913

DEAR GARNETT

Many thanks for A. Williams' new book*: I had intended getting it. Also Lucy Bettesworth,† but I find I can borrow that from a friend and it may not be a book one would want to keep. At all events it had seemed to me that the last drop of juice had been squeezed out of *that* orange. And Mrs. Bettesworth was not a very fragrant or inviting person in the former books. However, I'll wait and see. Hardy's book I haven't finished with yet : I read a tale when in the mood. That's the advantage I have over you : you must finish a book when you take it up and have done with it. I read your review in the "Nation" and agreed with it all. But that last story, the romantic adventures of a milkmaid, is really delightful : it is Hardy in his most fanciful mood, the Hardy of the "Return of the Native" with a fantastic fairy-land element mixed with it.

I shall be delighted if you will come in on Wednesday afternoon. I have been bad these last few days and my wife more nervous and troubled at her state than usual. I'm taking a lot of Hydrochloric acid now, but it doesn't get me well, or any better. There's nothing else to be done, my doctor says, except to get rid of all anxiety, to live under blue skies and soak myself in sunshine—which seems a large order in Westbourne Park ! Luckily (for us) the weather keeps mild.

Ever yours,

W. H. HUDSON

* *Villages of the White Horse*. By A. Williams. Duckworth & Co. 1913.

† *Lucy Bettesworth*. By George Bourne. Duckworth & Co. 1913.

40 ST. LUKE'S ROAD W. December 12th 1913

DEAR GARNETT

Thanks for your last letter which should have been answered days ago. Heaven knows when I'll be able to make any collection of the papers. At least seven or eight must be re-written and added to and three or four new chapters added. I have rough drafts and that's all. And if I get it done Duckworth would probably not have them—I mean buy them straight off. "The Bird and Man" I might manage to do if he will have it.

I read your review of Mrs. Wharton's book* and should like to read the book too if you have it to send, or if you have lent it and will have it back some day. She appears to have followed her master and idol James in de-Americanizing herself, and to have done it even more thoroughly. Well, her picture is true : it is as rotten and contemptible a society as—ours, and once more I thank the gods *we* are going to have a touch of war, the only remedy for the present disease.

No change here, except that my wife is rather worse in her nerves than before. I am seeing my doctor of late a good deal, but he can't do much for me I fear.

Yours,

W. H. HUDSON

What a fine speech A. F.† made last evening : what a contrast to that of G. B. S. ! Did Shaw ever neglect an opportunity of blowing his own brass trumpet ? *All* trumpets are brass, I know, but was there ever so brassy a one !

* *The Custom of the Country*. By Edith Wharton. Macmillan. 1913.

† On this occasion, an evening reception in honour of Anatole France given by the Fabian Society, the insularity and lack of cosmopolitan culture shown by the English speakers contrasted painfully with the urbanity and wide European vision of the great French writer.—E. G.

40 ST. LUKE'S ROAD W. *December 23rd 1913*

DEAR GARNETT

Just a line to thank you for the two books received, and to say I sent you a small box of cigars to smoke on Xmas day. I wish I could smoke a cigar, but now I haven't touched tobacco for the last three months.

A remarkable article on Anatole France and what *we* appear to think of him appears in the "Saturday Review" (current number) by a Frenchman—Ernest Dimnet. I'd like to hear what you think of it. Also what do you think—or what will you think of the long article on Galsworthy's "Dark Flower" in yesterday's "Morning Post." It is ostensibly a review, a long elaborate essay on love and a study of Galsworthy's conception of it, contrasted with that of Meredith.

I'm just starting Thomas's "Happy-go-Lucky Morgans"* and will tell you what I think of it by and by.

With best wishes of the Season to you all.

Yours affectionately,

W. H. HUDSON

40 ST. LUKE'S ROAD W. *December 29th 1913*

DEAR GARNETT

I'm sorry I haven't got the "Morning Post" with the "Dark Flower" article. I don't take the "M.P." and saw it at the reading room. I think it was in last Monday's paper.

I hope David is not going to confine himself to mushrooms and toadstools, or even to the entire vegetable kingdom

* *The Happy-go-Lucky Morgans*. By Edward Thomas. Duckworth, 1913.

lest his fate should be that of the pale small boy full of wonder at the world and life described in Lord Lytton's "Botanist's Grave." He sets out to find the secret of life and ends by being a "great" botanist, a writer of monographs which nobody reads and are not intended to be read. That bitter poem of Lytton's is one of my favourites : it is the one poem in which the pupil was greater than the master—I mean Browning, and am thinking of the "Grammarian's Funeral."

The "Happy-etc. Morgans" interested me greatly, but I don't think it will interest the reading public one bit. It interested me because of my esteem and affection for him (and my admiration too), also because I believe he has taken the wrong path and is wandering lost in the vast wilderness. A good many of us are in the same sad case. He is essentially a poet, one would say of the Celtic variety, and this book shows it I think more than any of the others. That is to say the nature books. As to the Swinburne and works of that kind it is a kind of work that poets often enough attempt and succeed in better than others. But I should say that in his nature books and fiction he leaves all there's best and greatest in him unexpressed. I don't mean to say that because a man is a poet he may not successfully write great prose works. There's Hardy for example : and there's Hewlett and plenty besides. But we can't do everything or anything, and I believe that if Thomas had the courage or the opportunity to follow his own genius he could do better things than these. You may say that no one can live by writing poetry ; but that has nothing to do with the question. You noticed probably in reading the book that every person described in it—Morgan, Arthur, Phillip, Anne, Aurelius, Tarrance and the rest are one and all just Edward Thomas. A poet trying to write prose fiction often does this.

I'm not at all well. Best regards to Constance and David.

Yours,

W. H. HUDSON

40 ST. LUKE'S ROAD W. *January 6th 1914*

DEAR GARNETT

The book you sent, Major's *Early-Wessex*,* has an appetising look, but I haven't been able to look at it yet (except the preface) so must lie on the table until I can take it up or until you want it back to lend to someone in a hurry. The Mrs. Wharton I've also put down after a few chapters—for the present. You didn't say enough in your review : you damned the people described in the book—the social state that can produce such creatures—and they certainly are detestable, or would be if one could believe that Mrs. Wharton is a true seer. Nothing in any of them to love or reverence or pity or forgive ; no beauty, sweetness, pathos ; but they are all like people made of zinc with their characters painted in big black letters on their surfaces so that there shall be no mistake. To read her book is like coming into a drawing-room, such as are common nowadays, overlit with dozens of electric lights—all a hard blinding glare with no faintest spot of shade anywhere. I was going to say the only writer in England she could be likened to is Frank Danby. But it would be an insult to Mrs. Frankau : detestable as most of her people are they are human, and even Dr. Phillips of Maida Vale, the worst of the lot, who poisons his invalid wife for the sake of his mistress, moves one's compassion as any real human being does. However, I can't suppose you had any motive in sparing her, notwithstanding her dog-like fidelity (if that is the right word) to the master Henry James. To go back to the subject I started with : I've had too many books tumbled upon me the last few days, including Frazer's last two vols.—“*Bolder the Beautiful*.” (You may want to read it some day.) But I've neglected them all to read a

* *Early Wars of Wessex*. By A. F. Major. Cambridge University Press. 1914.

3 penny book I picked up on a cheap stall a few days ago—Leigh Hunt's autobiography. Oddly enough I've known L.H. since I was fourteen or fifteen, when owing to being struck down with a fever which made me a prisoner for a couple of months, I first began to look at books. Some of his books were on the shelves. But I never knew till now that he had written his own life. As an autobiography it has serious faults, but it charms and disarms me, especially the early chapters, and most of all those about his mother. What a marvellously beautiful picture he gives of her ! Well, she was an American and must have been strangely like my mother, who was also American, and Hunt's mother's people were loyalists while my mother's forbears were furiously anti-English from the very beginning of the discontent which ended in the Revolution. The Hunts were very poor when he was a small boy, and he relates that one night he was with his mother somewhere in the vicinity of Blackfriar's Bridge when a wretched woman begged of them. His mother had no money to give, but she told the woman to follow her, and going into a small dark side street divested herself of the flannel petticoat and gave it to her. It was bitterly cold and rheumatism and long illness followed as a result of her action. Well, my mother did very many things far far greater than that. I remember after her death going into a native rancho one day, and the old woman of the house, over 80, got up from the stool where she sat over the fire and said, with the tears running from her eyes, " She always called me Mother when she came to see me, but she was my mother and the mother of us all, and what shall we do now she has gone ? " How many men—tens and hundreds of thousands of men—could say as much as you and I and Leigh Hunt of a mother whose memory they worship : but all this has no existence in the world of certain fictionists whose fictions are invariably hailed by the reviewers as the " real thing," as " true to life " and all that.

Well, this is a long enough screed. As for what you say

about criticising one's friends of course I don't take it seriously : it is just your fun—an attempt to draw me out. If I were to take it seriously, how if I were to ask you by way of retort—what would you say of the man on the bench who allowed his judgments to be swayed by his personal likes or dislikes ? I take it that morally the reviewer of books is in the position of the man on the bench, that his brain and not his heart must decide, and he has only to judge justly—and “ damn the consequences.”

Ever yours,

W. H. HUDSON

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40 ST. LUKE'S ROAD W. January 19th 1914

DEAR GARNETT

Somehow I can't get on with the book*—or can't get into it. I've just glanced at one or two chapters and it strikes me the author can't put his theories lucidly, and can't make his book interesting. He seems to give too much attention to the old discredited documents—the old lies of the histories—to take it for granted that the population of Wessex was *Celtic*—Britons—they having wiped out the old inhabitants—that they in turn were wiped out by the Saxons. But it wasn't so—the southern portion—the lower half of Hampshire with much of Wilts and Dorset has a large dark element in the people wh can't be accounted for on his theory. So I return the book, tho' I'm glad Mr. Major is sensible enough to write the letter I cut from yesterday's “ Observer ”—“ We English ”—all that comes from Freeman ; perhaps he is too much of a Freemanite.

Yours with thanks,

W. H. HUDSON

* *Early Wars of Wessex.*

40 ST. LUKE'S ROAD W. *March 30th (?)* 1914

DEAR GARNETT

Since March 14 I've been in bed with a frightful attack of gastric catarrh, and am just beginning to sit up an hour or so by the fire. That I didn't die a week ago is a wonder to me, I was so exhausted—I feel now much like one who has just come up from some such underworld as the gloomiest minded of all the tribe of poets have imagined. I have two doctors seeing me every day and they think I can be got away in a few days now.

I can't read, so don't send me anything—until I'm away. The light looks so terribly dark to me !

Affectionately yours,

W. H. HUDSON

40 ST. LUKE'S ROAD W. *April 11th* 1914

DEAR GARNETT

Thanks for your enquiry and papers. The New Weekly appears to have nothing readable but your A. France paper : it can't live long I fancy.

So far I'm making little or no progress, and must wait till I'm stronger before I can venture away from London.

Shall begin by writing to people who let, to try to find something, as up till now I've failed. I had hoped to be able to go and look for a place myself by the beginning of next week but it's no use I see—the weakness will last too long—it would keep me here till the summer was finished.

I hope you are enjoying the sea and cliffs.

Yours,

W. H. HUDSON

40 ST. LUKE'S ROAD W. *Friday evening April 17th 1914*

DEAR GARNETT

I have written to-day to take rooms, as I heard this morning about them and they appear to be what we want. Of course if they are not quite suitable we can find others, in a week or two, and besides it was only meant for a shelter while I am looking for a place where my wife can be left.

Please thank Constance and David for the box full of Chart primroses received this morning.

With thanks for all your kindness.

Yours ever,

W. H. HUDSON

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THE COTTAGE PARK ROAD WORTHING *April 21st 1914*

DEAR GARNETT

We came down here this morning—a decent sort of place, with garden all round the house and a field at the back—three or four minutes from the front: so it will be all we want for a fortnight or so, and by that time I hope to find a good home for my wife down here. The little journey has tired us both to-day.

Yours with affection,

W. H. HUDSON

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THE COTTAGE PARK ROAD WORTHING *April 24th 1914*

DEAR GARNETT

Many thanks for yours received yesterday and the packet of books. I've seen a good deal about Grant Watson's book* and hope to read it by and by. Just now I've got a MS. of a nature book to read with great care and to comment on and criticize, as the author wants to publish but is timid and wants to be put in the way of improving the work. "The Corner of the Downs" is a slight thing—I glanced through it yesterday. The play† by Lawrence I've read with interest. He makes one angry as a rule with most of his things, but he has great talent. The Furry Farm book I wanted to read and am glad to have the chance. Where shall I send them when I've done with them—London or the Cearne? You can tell me some day before I leave here a fortnight hence. I think I'm making some progress, but my wife appears just about in the same state. Yours with affection,

W. H. HUDSON

I saw some notices of "The Mob,"‡ mostly unfavourable.

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THE COTTAGE PARK ROAD WORTHING *May 3rd 1914*

DEAR GARNETT

I am going to send you the parcel of books to-morrow, as I shall be going up to stay a few days in London on Tuesday afternoon. I've arranged for my wife to stay here, which is

* *Where Bonds are Loosed.* By Grant Watson. 1914.

† *The Widowing of Mrs. Holroyd.* By D. H. Lawrence. 1914.

‡ *The Mob.* A Play by John Galsworthy. Produced April, 1914.

the best place we can find as it—the house—stands in its own grounds and there are nice lawns and gardens to walk in. I have also engaged a nice woman—a lady I had heard of before we came down—to be the nurse and attendant. If I can manage it I shall after a few days in town go to Cornwall for a while. Thanks for the loan of the books. I hadn't time to read Grant Watson's book—I can't read many novels in any case ; but I've read the other three. "The Folk of Furry Farm"* I wanted to read very much and have got some moderate enjoyment out of it. It would have done better without Canon Hannay's Introduction—*à la* G. B. S. It's all very well for Shaw to write in that way and tell the critics what to say. . . . The play by Lawrence is pretty good, but it is spoilt by the novel "Sons and Lovers," which contains all there is in the play and a thousand times more. I was at Brighton yesterday to visit our friend Mrs. Walker who has cancer on the liver, and is staying at a nursing home. She was very cheerful and believes she will get well. She told me that E. Thomas had an article on me in last Friday's "T.P.'s Weekly."

Yours ever,

W. H. HUDSON

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GREY FRIARS ASCOT *Tuesday september 15th 1914*

DEAR GARNETT

I have been very ill for some time past staying here : my London doctor told me I was not fit to go up and down to Worthing each week, so accepted offer of getting down by motor here. My London doctor did me no good so am being treated by a man at Ascot—a Dr. Paterson—one of those men who have had a lot of experience and are observers but

* *The Folk of Furry Farm*. By K. F. Purdon. London. 1914.

do not follow the fashion in medicine of the day. People here think highly of him, and he has many of the distinguished residents, Lord Roberts included, among his patients. Ascot Grand Stand has just been converted into a Hospital for our wounded—they are arriving to-day—and Dr. Paterson has been appointed the head. That says much for him. He disapproves *in toto* of the treatment I have been receiving, and as I begin to find some benefit from his treatment it may be he will pull me up for a bit. Anyhow I wouldn't have gone down much more without going under. My wife is going on all right and I hear every day—she urges me to stay on here where I'm getting every comfort and help and half a dozen servants to look after me.

The talk is war, war, war, and I'm weary of it. And what a deadly thing it must be for literary folk ! What chance will any book stand now ? Perhaps there is to be no season at all for publishers. We have six or seven papers here a day, and I search in vain for something not about the war. I find nothing of yours in the " Nation " which comes in on Saturday. My hope and prayer is that we may crush the mighty war lord, God's friend and favourite, utterly before long and so have a normal life for the world once more.

Yours affectionately,
W. H. HUDSON

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THE COTTAGE PARK ROAD WORTHING December 13th 1914

Thanks for p.c. from France. I heard from Thomas you had gone there. I am here laid up with bronchitis and other troubles : have been confined to my room a month and no prospect of getting over it yet. I was gradually getting well under the Ascot doctor, but unfortunately on a visit to my wife here caught cold, and this is the result.

Yours,
W. H. HUDSON

40 ST. LUKE'S ROAD W. *February 10th 1915*

DEAR GARNETT

I'm not sure that I didn't reply to your last letter. If I didn't it was because you wrote from France and said you were on your way back and gave no address. Shortly afterwards I was told that you had gone to St. Malo, and were in a hospital for the wounded doing something. Later, Thomas informed me you were back in England. Meanwhile I was laid up with bronchitis in Worthing—part of November, all of December and part of January. Two months shut up in one room. Then I went for a while to Ascot, then came here, but I think of returning to Ascot this week. Will see my doctor there as I'm still unwell.

You think it a "cursed war," I think it a blessed war. And it was quite time we had one for our purification and our [word missing] from the degeneration the rottenness which comes of everlasting peace. It was for this reason that I prayed for war in Ireland, which would have quickly spread to England, in those hateful days when the leaders of Liberalism—now clothed and in their right minds—were frantically jeering at Ulsterism. But this war is better, and the blood that is being shed will purge us of many hateful qualities—of our caste feeling, of our detestable partisanship, our gross selfishness, and a hundred more. Let us thank the gods for a Wilhelm and a whole nation insane with hatred of England to restore us to health.

It may be that before another 50 years the human race will discover some means of saving itself from rotting without this awful remedy of war. But I don't know : that lies in the lap of the gods.

As you write on Tuesday from the Cearne I suppose you

haven't been up to town. I was going to call yesterday to see you but didn't find time when in that neighbourhood.

With love to Constance and David.

Yours,

W. H. HUDSON

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GREY FRIARS ASCOT June 12th 1915

DEAR GARNETT

I intended looking you up last Tuesday but was too unwell and on Thursday came down here to see old Dr. Paterson, who did me a lot of good before, to try him again. He says I ought to have been to see him long ago, and has given me something which may do me a little good. I shall stay here a few days now I am here. Before Mrs. Woolf's book* vanishes altogether from my memory I must tell you just what I think about it. . . . It has good things in it. The trouble is that the framework is so clumsily constructed. Here are a lot of people put on a ship and when it gets to its destination they find themselves mixed up with a lot more at a hotel—all English people of one class (that of the author)—all thinking, talking and acting exactly like the people one meets every day in every London drawing-room. All their talk, and God knows there's a lot of it—and all they think and do has no relation to the environment—the place they are supposed to be in which only differs from an English background in having a sky of Rickett blue. Somewhere in S. America it is supposed to be, and once or twice "natives" are mentioned. The scene might just as well have been in some hotel on the South coast of England. There are about twenty characters, men and

* *The Voyage Out*. By Virginia Woolf. Duckworth & Co. 1915.

women, but there is not one real man. She is more successful with her own sex. All types, more or less familiar, especially Helen—the author's portrait of herself or what she would like to be. But Helen is in some ways a failure. Where she succeeds best is in drawing a kind of woman that interests her and that she has really observed—the woman with an eager shallow mind, intensely emotional and with a strain of hysteria in her. There are three, Mrs. Dalloway is the best, next is Evelyn Murgatroid, and last, Rachel. On Rachel she has spent most care and thought, and for this reason perhaps is less successful. She cannot finish the portrait, and so without rhyme or reason takes this, the youngest and healthiest of the whole crowd, and puts her to death. A rather brutal way of bringing the work to an end. I mean from an artistic point of view. . . .

Talking about artistry in novelists, what do you think of Wells who was always publicly taking off his hat to Henry James as the "Novelist's novelist," our one and only consummate artist, and who now in "Boon" calls him "a painful hippopotamus trying to pick up a pea"?

Ever yours,

W. H. HUDSON

Anton Tchegov's book is splendid.

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ST. MICHAEL'S HOSPITAL HAYLE CORNWALL

Thursday evening December 10th 1915

DEAR GARNETT

Your letter has just come to me here, where I'm in bed in a nursing home, a Roman Catholic one in connexion with the church and convent. However, the Doctor is a Scotsman and staunch Protestant, so no harm will come to me spiritually. Be assured of that. I came to Lelant as the guest of the

Ranee in a house she had taken there and stocked with six of her Ascot servants : we thought the milder climate and change would have done me good but I got worse in health almost day by day and complications arose and in desperation I had to go to a local doctor who said it was necessary to have a spell in bed to begin with, also that the drugs the Harley Street physician was dosing me with were making me worse. I would not and could not stay in a private house with all this on me, so I got taken in here. I think there is a slight improvement—a promise that at all events I may be able to get round enough this time to complete all the work I've had in hand for some time past and leave it in a fit state for publication. The Ranee and other friends living in this part are very kind and visit me, and I don't suffer except from long sleepless nights with aches and pains. If I get well enough to leave the home I shall probably go back to Lelant for January. And I should like to be well enough to attempt the journey to London about the beginning of that month. But I don't see much chance of our being able to meet. Are you writing anything about your Isonzo experiences ? I'm sorry you are leaving Duckworth's : you may find another place of that kind to suit you but one doesn't easily find a man of his sort to work with.

I had a letter from Thomas a day or two ago after a very long interval, in which he asks me if you spoke to me about something being done to get him on the Civil List. I believe you did speak about it, but I can't remember just what you said. These long months of suffering and struggling to get things done have put most things out of my mind. I hope to hear from you again while I'm in prison—and with love to you and Constance, am yours affectionately,

W. H. HUDSON

ELM HOUSE LELANT CORNWALL *April 11th 1916*

DEAR GARNETT

Your ancient and well-nigh illegible note, with a modern postscript, has just reached me. Isn't it odd that I'm always hearing from everyone I know that *they hear* I am in good spirits and better health. So was my doctor's spirits good the other day when he called to see me and chuckled and coughed over his own funny stories, and next morning, getting into his motor-car and lighting a cigarette, he dropped dead. I'm now lost without him as he understood my case and gave me some relief, though his opinion was that my life was no longer worth two straws. At all events, though it's the case that I have need to go to London, that it is necessary I should get note-books, papers, documents, I have locked up at home, I can't get there ; and this after waiting and watching for months for a little improvement—just enough to enable me to take the journey to Paddington ! I'm not back at the hospital now because there's no place for me : the room I had has been given to a young Hemy—a son of Napier Hemy the old R.A., whose age is seventy-five . . . but has six (6) ! pictures in the Academy this spring ! I had Nevinson here to see me a day or two ago—just back from Salonika. I am glad such a fierce and merciless critic of his own country's shortcomings is able to say that never in all her history has England been more justified in making war than in this instance. But he agrees with me that a *Civil War is best !* He will be in it no doubt when it comes—I shall not even hear of it.

Yours,

W. H. H.

ELM HOUSE LELANT CORNWALL May 14th 1916

DEAR GARNETT

Thanks for your offering to get papers for me, but you couldn't do it if you tried ever so hard. It would take me a day to discover in which of the note-books, in which pile and which of the 40 drawers the matter I want is to be found. And as for the documents—*that* would be ten times more difficult. No, I must go when I can, if ever, and do what I can without the notes and try to finish something. I rashly promised Dent ten to twenty thousand words more matter to add to "Birds in a Village" to make a more substantial book of it, and he keeps writing urging me to do it—not that he can bring the book out just now but because we are both in a bad way, and he doesn't want the thing left incomplete when we disappear from the scene. I daresay the loss of his sons has been a blow to him in his shaky state of health. The trouble is I keep on writing articles—some bird ones—and they appear in "Country Life" and other publications and I find they are not just what I want for the volume, so wait to do something more suitable. I was going back to Hayle nursing home but unfortunately *my* room, the only one there was vacant after I left it, and in succession Mrs. Havelock Ellis, who is back in London now, is now again occupied. . . .

The R.A. of Literature has just covered itself with everlasting glory by electing and rejecting—can you believe it!—Walter de la Mare and Charles Doughty! I feel strongly inclined to resign my fellowship of the Society after that. I wonder if one of all those who voted against Doughty had ever read the "Dawn in Britain," and if they were capable of knowing great poetry when they saw it. You don't say what you are doing about readership and such work. But as to

Raemaeker*—I don't want any more artistic representations of his work—what his aim is appears quite plain enough in the "Land and Water" reproductions, and they are valuable because of the accompanying notes by so many different hands. What are your comments going to be, I wonder? or will you let the pictures go out naked, without a vine leaf, as Bacon says? I've read about ten Russian novels lately—I don't know of any now I haven't read.

With love to Constance and David,

Yours,

W. H. H.

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40 ST. LUKE'S ROAD W. *June 24th* 1916

DEAR GARNETT

Yours, dated 19 *July*, 1916, has come back here from Lelant. I had to come up, and as the Ranee, who owns a cottage in Lelant and stays a good deal there, was coming up with her maids in June I planned to come in same train as I was a bit nervous about that long non-stop run to Paddington. But I was too unwell to start with them, and so after all had to come up a few days later by myself. However, it doesn't hurt me to travel, and it didn't fatigue me more than it would anyone in good health. But I can't *walk* without bringing on a heart trouble: that organ is too weak to let me get any proper exercise. I managed to get to Duckworth's a day or two ago, and by chance saw Milsted in khaki and he asked me to remember him to you. When do you take your holiday in Dorset? If I don't get worse soon I may return to Cornwall in August—but it is very doubtful. I'm most anxious

* *The Great War*. One Hundred Cartoons. By Louis Raemaekers. The Fine Art Society. London. 1916.

to get a little work finished while I'm here, but can't get on with it. And I've got my big sitting-room stuffed up with all the old lumber from the top flat, so at present only occupy the bed-sitting-room, and that's the only place I can receive you in if you can spare time to come over and see me. Only drop me a p.c. to say when to expect you any afternoon at 4.30 or later.

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40 ST. LUKE'S ROAD W. *June 28th 1916*

DEAR GARNETT

I had my morning with the great Sir James Mackenzie to-day and as he imagined he had found an intelligent listener he gave me some account of his own work and object in life. For the last thirty years, he said, he had been studying the question of just such a condition of the heart as mine, which he finds extremely common. The ordinary ignorant practitioner simply kills his patient, or at all events can't prevent his dying. His aim has been (he says) to find how to keep such people alive—if they are workers and breadwinners—and not only to keep them alive but able to continue their work ; and this in innumerable cases he has been able to do by teaching them how to order their lives, when to suspend work and what to take when the trouble is on them. My heart, he says, will go on just as it is now, but when it gets very bad I am to take big doses of digitalis, three or four times as much as the doctors usually give, and I am not to get any such ailments as bronchitis, pneumonia, pleuritis and so on, as the heart couldn't stand the strain ! It all came to this. Don't get ill and you'll go on all right as you are. He is I think a big man and can afford, and it is his nature, to say what he thinks and be perfectly sincere. He tells me to go and see him often,

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and will take no fee from me : all he wants from me, he says, is a gift of some of my books.

Forgot to ask you if you have many glow-worms at the Cearne this summer. I couldn't see one in Cornwall, and at Lelant and Hayle they say they never see them. I'll write to you when you are in Dorset.

Yours affectionately,

W. H. H.

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40 ST. LUKE'S ROAD W. *July 3rd* 1916

DEAR GARNETT

Good for you it *is* July now as you have stuck to dating your letters that month all June. "July 30" is your last date !

Thanks for advt. It reads like a boarding-house, but I've written to Miss Williams for particulars. She's a Quaker I see, and Falmouth has a big colony of them—some (the Foxes) very notable people.

Sir James Mackensie told me what I already knew pretty well, that I may go on some time barring accidents, as my heart will not stand the push of more pleurisy, bronchitis and pneumonia attacks. And those are *the* three devilish Fates that are always threatening me.

I hope you will enjoy your Dorset holiday : you might send me a line when you are there to say how it goes. I wish I could walk to explore the heath near Corfe Castle to look for the colony of Dartford Warblers one of the Bankes told me he found there.

Yours ever,

W. H. H.

40 ST. LUKE'S ROAD W. August 6th 1916

DEAR GARNETT

Thanks for your letter of July 31. I think I must wait till the end of this month before beginning to look for a place as I don't care to take rooms unless I see them and the situation of them. That place I wrote to at Falmouth seems very attractive, and the lady wanted me to engage the rooms, but I declined to do so as from the description I might find it too steep for me. I want to stay in a village rather than a big town like Falmouth, and it would take a long time to find just the right place. Later on I think I shall advertise in the "Western Morning News."

I have just come back from Worthing. I had to come back as the room engaged for me was for a week only and could not be kept longer. There isn't a garret or hole in the whole town that's not let : all the people who go on a holiday rush down like sheep to the South coast, and of course it is very uncomfortable and the weather was frightfully hot, so that there was not much benefit from that visit. My wife is well enough, but tired of Worthing and thinks she would like to go to Cornwall for the winter too, so I shall have to arrange that as well.

George Moore as Christ! * There's nothing funny in that. Fresh Christs spring up every day, and I daresay Casement is a Christ to a good many persons just now. George Moore is a good writer—a literary man's writer, but I don't read him because he is insincere. Of course he is in good company—de Quincey for example and Oscar Wilde and other immortals : but to me they are no good even if they write like angels if they do not write from the heart. What do you think of Snaith I wonder ? I've just read his "Sailor," which is good in parts. . . .

* A reference to George Moore's *Brook Kerith*.

I have just re-read "Esmond"—a grand book if one can get into the right 18th century mind for it ; also "Roderick Hudson"—the best book James ever wrote, although one of his chief characters—Miss Garland—is a complete failure. But Roderick and Christina Light are the two finest character studies he ever made.

Yours,

W. H. HUDSON

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40 ST. LUKE'S ROAD W. *September 29th 1916*

DEAR GARNETT

Yes, I'm here now, though I had hoped to be away by this time. Wednesday next will suit me very well, and I shall expect you up till 4.30 that afternoon. If you don't come by that time (unless you inform me of a change of time) I shall be out, as I generally take the air towards evening. I have no servant, as she is away in Scotland now, so get my meals out. Tea I can manage. I didn't see Thomas as he couldn't come to me when he was in London. I heard indirectly (from Morley Roberts) that the Galsworthys were in town, but they have not written so don't know about their movements.

With love to all,

Yours,

W. H. HUDSON

42 ST. LUKE'S ROAD WESTBOURNE PARK W.

December 10th 1916

DEAR GARNETT

Got your letter yesterday. I'm *here* just at present next door to my place, as I've let my Flat for the winter. I've been staying at Worthing to get my wife moved into a more comfortable winter place before I went away, and had just got her settled a fortnight ago when I got a chill down there and came in a hurry back to town to get straight away to Cornwall ; but the doctor here advised me to lie up until I got over the cold, and as I've just got over it now I intend starting on Tuesday morning. I knew my next door neighbours fortunately and they put me up when I came back.

As to "Green Mansions," I have had cuttings sent me but must have thrown them on the fire as they came as I can't find one in my pocket book. They were not worth anything. . . . Roosevelt's Preface is not worth a damn : he says nothing except that he likes my book, etc. The New "Crystal Age" has not yet been sent, but Macrae, Dutton's manager in N. York, sent me a proof of the Foreword by the Literary Editor of the "N.Y. Times" and I send it on to you for what it is worth.

I'm afraid to make an appointment for to-morrow as I've got rather more than I can do. But if I should not finish my preparations and have to put the journey off till Wednesday I'll let you know.

I hope Constance is well, and that her eyes no longer trouble her.

40 St. Luke's is my address all the same as letters are sent on.

Yours,

W. H. HUDSON

MADEIRA HOUSE FLUSHING FALMOUTH *December 17th 1916*

DEAR GARNETT

I have settled here for the present and if comfortable may remain two or three months. It was a weary business hunting for lodgings ; first at St. Mawes across the bay where I thought of staying, then here—"the warmest village in England"—then in Falmouth. Nothing I liked could I find. I even tried that place the address of which you sent me in a paper called "The Friend," but found it shut up and the people gone. Anyhow it was too high and steep a hill to suit me. So after all I had to come back to Flushing and take the best I could get—rooms not as large as I wanted but both the bed and sitting-rooms face the south and look upon Falmouth, divided from Flushing by an arm of the sea, and the harbour and bay and surrounding hills. It is a very fine prospect and was quite beautiful at sunset this evening.

Thanks for letting me read your Lawrence article : I return it as it may be wanted. It doesn't alter my opinion, and strikes me as a strangely laborious composition as if you were trying to convince yourself as much as the reader of the man's genius. With your praise of "Sons and Lovers" I agree, but with nothing else much, and he remains to my mind a small minor poet and you make him no greater by depreciating the others. But I differ most with you in your attempt to make what strikes me as bad art good. What is the use of quoting some unknown American about Keats' morality ! No one complains of Keats, nor of Hardy (in spite of his petulance about what the "Pall Mall" once said in a foolish moment), or against any writer who writes truthfully about human passions. Or even who is deliberately obscene like Smollett or good old Chaucer. Who, for instance, doesn't enjoy the Miller's tale—told when he (the miller) was "dronk." Chaucer himself tells you it's very nasty, and asks

you not to read it, but you *do* read it and *enjoy* it, and yet to turn to a great modern poet, a great genius, and read his lyrical biting and gnawing at the breasts of his mistress till his mouth is full of blood and foam ! . . . And so your Lawrence, though a small poet, yet makes one a little sick, and that I take it is bad art. At all events Chaucer doesn't have that effect on me.

Of course I should like to see your article on my stuff, but I really care no more for "El Ombú" and "A Purple Land" than for "A Crystal Age," and look on it all as poor stuff.

I think I'm out of the world here and do not expect to see a friend's face till I return to London, if I live long enough. But when you write you will perhaps give me some tidings of some of our friends—Edward Thomas, Scott James, Conrad, Galsworthy chiefly. I'm glad you are sending me your wife's translation of Tchekhov books as I have little to read here.

With love to both,

Yours,

W. H. HUDSON

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FLUSHING FALMOUTH *January 27th 1917*

DEAR GARNETT

"This icy East-wind weather" as you mildly describe it certainly has besieged me, and with a vengeance. A week ago to-day I ventured over to Falmouth and was nearly shrivelled up by the icy blasts. Since then I haven't put my nose out of the door—an entire week ! No such weather has ever been known in this part, is what they all say. Well, all I know is that it is simply damnable and even by the fire my fingers get so stiff I can't hold a pen. We are only divided

from Falmouth by a strip of sea less than the Thames in width, but the people can't cross to do their shopping owing to the fury of the gale. And that's how it has been for many days and nights. I only wish I could place all the articles I've written since I came, and would take less than five pounds and be thankful. It isn't easy to get anything taken now. I hope you'll send me the "Dial" when your article appears, though I certainly don't agree with your estimate of my writings. "El Ombú" doesn't go so well in America, the publisher says, but he has sold about 10,000 copies of "Green Mansions" and it is still going.

You *hope* I'm satisfied with the war ! Well, it's quite useless our discussing *that* subject—we can't understand each other ; and to cut it short I'll just do as the sailor did when he said, "them's my sentiments," indicating the Lord's Prayer framed and glazed and hanging on his bedroom wall. I have just cut out my "sentiments" from "The Times" and enclose it. I can only put in one word of my own, and that is that if you eagerly look for signs of coming disaster to our country you will certainly find them, with or without the aid of well-informed persons. It is one of the commonest mental illusions (the finding what we seek and desire to find), and you can read all about it in Sully's psychological book (called "Illusion") on the subject.

I know Glynde very well and wonder whose estate or farm David is on : and I wonder if he (with Mount Caburn always before his eyes) has ever heard of a former worthy of Glynde, —a man named Hall, who flourished in the 18th century and wrote the poem "Mount Caburn" ? Because he was a very extraordinary person.

Yours affectionately with stiff fingers,

W. H. HUDSON

FLUSHING FALMOUTH *March 4th* 1917

DEAR GARNETT

I looked for your "Dial" article, and lo! your packet turned out to be some Mexican stuff, and your letter a question about the "feathered-snake." You imagine I know all about it! And the best book on snake-worship! Probably one of the 40,000 supposed to have been written by Mercurius Trismegistus was the best, but as it didn't come down to us you must take your choice among modern stuff. I fancy Fergusson's big folio on Tree and Serpent worship would help you one way—you would get the names of some scores or hundreds of writers on the subject. Fergusson's theory that the occurrence of serpent worship over so many countries and continents was a proof of the unity of the human race is of course all rot: what is and must be believed is that men all over the globe in a certain stage of culture take to serpent-worship just as naturally as a duck takes to water. That's the one point that matters, and it was on that point that I had intended to write my "Book of the Serpent," but after a few chapters which appeared in Reviews some years ago I dropped it. I got sick of the subject *because* I looked at books on serpent-worship. They lead you not exactly into a Slough of Despond but on to an immeasurable marshy flat, stretching back from the present time (for people are writing books on this subject all the time), back to thousands of years B.C. And by the time you get to the aforementioned Mercurius Trismegistus only to be told that not one of his forty thousand books have been saved from the flames you sink down in despair. America, Africa, Asia, Europe—the serpent has been worshipped everywhere in all these continents—and in many places is worshipped still, and in many countries where it has practically faded away it has left a sort of twilight—a reverence for the snake, as is found in Finland

and in some places in the south of Europe, and in many lands in other continents. I suppose if you were to take up the subject with the idea of a comprehensive volume on it you could spend many years hard at work in the Brit. Museum taking notes, that if then you sifted and boiled your notes down, and compressed your matter in every way you could still have enough for a vol. almost as big as Kelly's "London Directory." And all we know about Mexican serpent-worship would only occupy a page or two. All Mexican history reminds one of the schoolboy's definition of a net as a lot of holes tied together with string. One of the holes is Quetzalcoatl. No doubt there was a tradition that this was a white and bearded man who came in a ship and taught the people many good things then sailed away and never returned. The only explanation I can imagine is that this was one of the Norse adventurers who first discovered and settled in America, that this one got as far down as Central America and was looked on as a supernatural being and well treated, and when he left them he was made a god, in spite of the fact that his character was so utterly unlike that of the other principal gods. Some of the Jesuit priests in their books about the S. American Indians pretend that they discovered a legend similar to that of the Mexcan god—a white man wearing a beard appears in a ship and teaching the natives art and so on. No doubt the explanation of this is that, after the Mexican legend became known to the Jesuit Missionaries, they started hunting for versions of it among their converts and suggested it to them and the poor savages anxious to please their masters naturally invented the story that was wanted. But the poor Guarani Indians of Paraguay couldn't get up a fine god with a fine title like the Mexican one. The hole, or one of the holes, or empty places, in the Quetzalcoatl legend is about the name of "feathered serpent" for a being in the form of a bearded white man. Not a word, so far as I know, in all the Mexican antiquarians. We haven't got the clue, but I imagine we can find it by attending to the serpent-

worship of other countries—of all the world I may say. In Hindustan the serpent is regarded as a friend and not an enemy ; a beneficent being it is good to reverence and make offerings to. In spite of all our Indian Government have done to make the people look on the cobra as a dangerous pest, this feeling for the serpent persists, and is the same as that of the ancient Greeks who revered the snake and regarded it as a lover of mankind and powerful to help man. That feeling to be found throughout India and Indo-China is the same as that of Madagascar—where the snakes are not venomous ; also of America, where, as ordered, serpent-worship with its own peculiar ceremonies still flourishes among the hill-side or cave-dwellers in Arizona. I believe it still exists in that form among the Finns—the adder being their Azo the daemon, just as it was of the British down to Roman times and probably for centuries later. There, I should say, is the clue : the Nahua, or Maya, or what he was, regarded the snake as a beneficent being, a helper or protector of man, a bringer of good ; and when the white man with a beard, having vanished, was deified the best title that could be found was bestowed on him—the “ feathered snake ”—a very fine snake indeed ! Quetzal by the way is the name in Central America of a trogon considered the most splendid of all birds. Quetzal then may actually mean more than feathered though it may mean that as well. No more paper and I’ve said enough.

Yours,

W. H. HUDSON

40 ST. LUKE'S ROAD W. *April 14th 1917*

DEAR GARNETT

I found your letter of the 8th here. I had sent you a newspaper from Exeter just to let you know that I had left Cornwall. I stayed at Exeter four days and had snow in plenty—the town was all white last Monday. Still it was not bad staying there as the Cathedral gives it a distinction above all towns in England, York perhaps excepted. You go back again to Stanley on “Birds”—the 1st vol. of the little work you sent me, and appear to be haunted with the notion that it was something of a discovery. Well, it was to you simply because you never give a thought to such a subject as Bird literature and never look for or see such stuff on a book-stall. I can never look at a stall but I see Stanley's book in one of the countless editions produced during about three-quarters of the 19th century. It is as common, say, as “The Dairyman's Daughter” (another classic which I daresay you never see) or Hervey's “Meditation Among the Tombs,” and other ancient favourites of our grandfathers and grandmothers. Popular books on Nat. Hist. were not common in those days, and a few that came out were very popular and constantly re-issued. The first (after Selborne White) was “The Journal of a Naturalist,” which for half a century or longer was regarded as a classic and yet never appeared with the name of the author, Knapp, on the title-page. It is still readable. Then there were 3 vols. on Birds in the Library of Useful Knowledge—all wonderfully good—there are no popular books on the subject now so well done and comprehensive and they are exceedingly well illustrated with wood-cuts. Dent was going to put them in the Everyman Library, but I advised him not to do so unless he could reproduce the cuts, and that he couldn't do. Should you come across that three—“Faculties of Birds,” “Habits of Birds” and “Archi-

ture of Birds"—they are worth buying. They were by James Rennie, the architect, the man who made the bridge over the Serpentine in Hyde Park—one of the best bridges in England. The last of the very popular books of this kind was Canon Atkinson's—sometime in the early fifties. He wrote other good books, one, the best, was "Forty Years in a Moorland Parish." He died a few years ago at a very advanced age.

I'm sorry you've got a bad vein—you don't say what the doctor says as to the trouble being curable. I hope it will pass off.

I am thinking of getting the "Anthology of New Poetry" to keep it as I'm curious to see what it is like. I don't know that you can say anything *new* about the new American poetry. The formless sort of stuff Masters writes can't mark any permanent work—unless a Whitman or a genius does it. What a falling off in Frost's last book! I had expected something so much better that it came as a sad disappointment. The book was sent me by Knopf from New York. Perhaps it will be as well to tell the Americans that the Chinese got disgusted 3000 years ago with that sort of poetry and gave it up. I suppose the learned Lancelot Cranmer Byng has now given up that kind of subject as he came into his inheritance some time ago. I heard from someone that the Galsworthys had come back to London, but haven't heard from them. That last volume of Tchehov, "The Duel," was not equal to his other work. And that last vol. of Dostoevsky was sad stuff—too crazy, and I should imagine that one reading it as the first work of the author would not want to go on to the other better books. The Vicar at Flushing was a greedy reader of Russian novels, so I allowed him to read Tchehov (which he didn't like) and left him the Dostoevsky.

Affectionately yours,

W. H. HUDSON

40 ST. LUKE'S ROAD NOTTING HILL W. *April 18th 1917*

DEAR GARNETT

Thanks for letter and books. Before I looked into your parcel I had heard from Roger Ingpen the sad news of Thomas's death. It is a great grief to me as he was a most loveable friend. I feel his death more than that of any one I know who has fallen so far.

I am sorry the Rancee has not yet returned Frost's book : I lent it to her in Cornwall one day three or four weeks ago when she came over from Lelant to see me at Flushing. Where she is now I don't know, as the old Rajah is supposed to be near his end. There are bulletins about his condition every day in the papers. She may be with him at Cirencester, or she may be at Ascot or in London. I'm writing to her now to ask her for the book back and will send it as soon as I get it. On Saturday I may go to Worthing for the week-end, and we can arrange to meet when I get back next week. I'll let you know in due time what I think of Amy Lowell her book.

Yours,

W. H. HUDSON

40 ST. LUKE'S ROAD W. *April 28th 1917*

DEAR GARNETT

The first few chapters of your St. Médard book* made me think you were right in what you say on the cover : that I was in for that rare experience—the reading of a book I really

* *The Pleasant Ways of St. Médard*. By Grace King. New York. Henry Holt & Co. 1916.

liked, one which would live in memory like "Cranford" and "Our Village." Not that the flavour of it was like Gaskell and Mitford any more than it was like that of Jane Austen. It reminded me rather of "The Chronicles of Carlingford," "Scenes of Clerical Life," and the "Green Graves of Balgowrie." *Apropos* of the Carlingford Chronicles, I imagine that if Mrs. Oliphant had been satisfied to produce one work every five years instead of five per annum she would have taken a high place among those who have written unforgettable books which only women can write. Alas! Grace King cannot be of that company, in spite of what you say: the charm of the early chapters, the tragedy and pathos shot with beautiful humour, falls off until little or nothing is left of it, and the good priest and naughty Cribbitche, and the Talbots and Mimie and her charming auld father no matter what they do and say to keep the interest up begin to bore you. By the time the book comes to a laborious conventional end one's pleasure in it has quite evaporated. I wish it hadn't been so.

Yours,

W. H. HUDSON

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40 ST. LUKE'S ROAD W. *sunday May 1917*

DEAR GARNETT

I haven't got Frost yet, but will send you my opinion of Amy Lowell's stuff. She is certainly clever, but seldom fails to irritate me. Except in those purely human little pieces called, for no earthly reason, "An Overgrown Pasture." They are a little like some of Frost's things, only she's always further off from poetry than Frost. Her decorative pieces are the cleverest and in these she sometimes does rise to poetry of an inferior sort. But as a "poet" she is, to use an Americanism, "small

potatoes," though in her own curious country she may be considered big potatoes. Some of the decorative pieces almost seem good enough to be like faint echoes of Keats, and in these poems she is perhaps at her best in "Pickthorn Manor." But that is not saying much. One has only to recall the "Eve of St. Agnes," "A Pot of Basil," "The Voyage to Samarcand," "The Blue Closet" and a dozen more to recognize how far beneath the great things in this kind she is. And the greatest decorative poetry is never really great poetry; nor can any poetry be of the greatest which has beauty for its sole object. Note how her *Muse*, her bird of paradise, tumbles out of the air and flutters ignominiously on the ground when in this same poem she comes into tragedy and tries to be poignant! But what can one say of the Cremona Violin and all those exercises in which she endeavours to reproduce sounds and movements? She appears to think that this is a new idea which "flashed into her mind." I remember that a minor Argentine poet of seventy or eighty years ago wrote a poem called "The Walse" infinitely better than the best of Miss Lowell's verse of that kind. But it is quite an ancient thing in Spanish poetry: it was an old Spanish poet who described the movement of the heron in his slow measured sublime flight:

Has visto hermosa en el cielo
La Gárza sonreirse su plácido vuélo?

The poem is not bad but is spoilt by these same attempts to reproduce the sounds of the instruments in words, which she imagines she has done so well. Many of the poems of this sort degenerate into pure silliness.

As I went out a-walking,
I was talking with Mr. Jones.
Jig-er-a-boo. Bang! Whang!
Clack! Chock! And so on.

I think I'd rather go back to the distressing "Bells" and Southey's "How the Waters Come Down at Lodore."

By the by, the feeling for and knowledge of nature in the

decorative poems is on a par with that of the milliner who sits in a room full of flowers (artificial), feathers and scraps of velvet and silk of all shades of colours, and who selects this and that colour and material to go together. Thus, in the "Figurines in Old Saxe" (God help us!), in the poem "Patterns" she walks among daffodils, when lime-trees are in blossom, and a lime-blossom falls from the tree on her. It doesn't matter that the lime blossoms three to four months after daffodils have vanished from the earth. Nor does anything matter so long as she gets her pattern. I get some slight pleasure from some of her best, but there are some of the poems I haven't read simply because I can't read them—because they are not poetry. . . .

Yours,

W. H. HUDSON

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40 ST. LUKE'S ROAD W. *June 10th 1917*

DEAR GARNETT

Here's the "Dial," with thanks for letting me see it. You say I didn't answer your letter of a fortnight ago. No, it was a reply to my letter giving you my ideas about Miss Lowell's poetry, as you asked me to do. There was nothing to answer except that you maliciously "took my words by the heels" as the gauchos say, so as to make me say something supremely ridiculous, about comparing her to Keats. You prick people that way just to see how they will take it: it is your choice pastime. Well, she's purely derivative, especially where she brags loudest of her originality, and in her decorative attempts she resembles Keats (and all the other poets she can be traced to) much as the vulgar wooden drawings of a Carruthers Gould resemble the human beings they caricature, or as they resemble a portrait by a Sargent or Watts or

Bordoni. In the "Dial" article you make some mistakes. "Hampshire Days" is not my "last book," there have been three or four since—I forget the exact number. I don't mean reprints. The passage about the cuckoo with reflexions on nature's waste of life is too long to quote. It just happens to be the only passage in the book in which I *minded* what I was about when I framed it and the omission of anything in it—even a sentence—spoils it all. About "A Crystal Age," you haven't said more in depreciation of it than I have myself (in the preface to the 3rd Edition). But the book in spite of absurdities is not inferior to the others. *They*, too, are absurd in some ways. A romance that has no new thoughts or idea in it is to me naught. A day or two ago for want of anything better I read "The World's Desire": is there a more pompous romance in English literature? And how unspeakably tedious I found it. But romances of that kind are no doubt great works and very delightful to readers who delight in that sort of thing—who don't want anything to make them think in a romance. To me a Utopia romance demands a compelling thought above all others, and that's why I think little of "News from Nowhere" because the thought in it is so thin, so childishly poor, so manifestly false. The thought is that before another century is out (the Revolution was to come and the change begins at the end of the 19th century), the inhabitants of the earth—of England at all events—will have become the wise, bright, beautiful and overflowingly happy creatures he describes. A sort of angel in fleshly garments: the transformation having been brought about by new social laws concerning the price of food and clothes and so on. How amazing that Morris who was a genius and great in many ways should have cherished this delusion that men could be dehumanized in that simple way! How do you account for it? I can only account for it by supposing that in some things, especially in the strength of the passion which man has in common with the lower animals but in a greater degree, he was *not* human—not exactly

normal. Abnormally developed on the æsthetic side of his mind, his blood was below the normal temperature ; and, quite naturally, he believed that blood generally was lukewarm. The sexual passion is the central thought in the " Crystal Age " : the idea that there is no millennium, no rest, no perpetual peace till that fury has burnt itself out, and I gave unlimited time for the change. It is, you say, the social model of the Beehive with the Queen Mother in its centre ; and you say that I have " adopted " the idea. Well, I didn't ; and if you know of books in which it appears before " A Crystal Age " was published, let me know. I have only seen it in a paper by Benjamin Kidd which appeared after my book was written, though not before it was published. Kidd did not imagine that human beings would change their nature because they became more civilized and had more creature comforts and so on. He always maintains that we are improving, morally and spiritually, but he finds there is *no change*, no sign of a change, no decline in the violence of the sexual rage that afflicts us. It burns as fiercely now as it did ten thousand years ago. We may look forward to the time when it will no more be said that the poor are always with us—but we see no end to prostitution : millions and millions of women in that state just to satisfy men's ferocious desire—not only of the young unmarried men, but of all men as an everlasting protest against the law that forbids a man to have more than one wife. It is that problem which makes the Utopias of the " Looking Back " and " News from Nowhere " type seem so unreal, so childish. Kidd believed that the sexual passion would eventually decay—it would have to decay simply because in no other way could man attain to that higher state—mentally morally, spiritually, to which he appears (or appears to Kidd) to be destined. I don't think that Kidd ever had the courage to introduce this idea and enlarge on it in any of his important works : I fancy he left it for a magazine article to be forgotten ; but in that article he says that Nature's solution of the problem would perhaps be that of the hive and the Queen mother—

the one in a thousand or a hundred capable of sexual love and child bearing. If that article had appeared before I wrote my book it could have been said that it gave me the idea of the book.

For the rest I of course agree with you in regarding the House Beautiful idea as trashy.

"A Crystal Age" is having no sale in America. "A Purple Land" a moderate sale—about equal to "Tales of the Pampas" (as the Ombú book is called). "Green Mansions" is still selling well.

Yours affectionately,

W. H. HUDSON

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40 ST. LUKE'S ROAD W. July 9th 1917

DEAR GARNETT

Why do you always say provocative—in some instances what women call aggravating things? Well, I know why, so you needn't tell me; you do it on principle or with a very definite purpose. And that's why you charge me with a "disturbing or perverse silence." As to expressing myself about Thomas's work—whenever I came upon some lovely bit about nature and country life in his reviews and articles, I let him know of my appreciation of it. But these nature books as a whole do not appeal to me because he does not seem to be quite or wholly himself in them. His appreciation of other men's work has been too keen—too ineradicable, and only allows him in rare moments to be unadulterated Edward Thomas. It is a common case—this of men who would have done better if they had not admired so much. The keener the admiration the more danger to originality, which is after all the main thing. I am waiting for his poems,

which Walter de la Mare promised to send me as soon as the book comes out. It may be that in verse he will be more himself, but I don't know. As a critic of poetry he was I think less influenced by other writers than in his creative work. But I'm no literary man, and these are questions for you, not for me. I can't go down to Worthing early this week as I had intended as the place is so overcrowded a room can't be found for me, and I shall be delighted if you will come and lunch with me at my luncheon place at Whiteley's. On Wednesday, at 1.15 to 1.30, say, and if you can come and don't see me under the clock in Queen's Road when you arrive go in at the main entrance and take the lift to the *top floor*, under the Rotunda—the luncheon room—and you'll find me there. If you can't manage it let me know—but in any case I shall be there.

Yours affectionately,

W. H. HUDSON

Do you read O. Henry?

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40 ST. LUKE'S ROAD W.11 *November 25th 1917*

MY DEAR GARNETT

I wanted badly to read your book* when it was sent to me but wasn't allowed to do so until now. I took it with me to Ascot, where it was pounced upon by Her Highness and was still in her possession when I went on to Worthing. Only after returning here and writing twice for it have I succeeded in getting it back. It is excellent reading, and you have managed the linking together of your appreciations so well that one would hardly suspect they had appeared separately

* *Turgenev. A Study.* By Edward Garnett. Collings & Son. 1917.
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at different dates. And I think you convince us that Turgenev was not only an artist but one of the most loveable of men. That attack Dostoevsky made on him (which I had read) expressing such scorn and hatred, must have emanated from that strain of insanity which appears instinctive or ingrained not only in D. himself but in all Russians. Turgenev was distinctly an exception : how natural that he should have been hated and despised by his countrymen ! Of course I don't use the word insanity in the ordinary sense : I mean some quality of a race which is a drawback, a weakness, a stumbling-block, a perpetual curse to it.

It would be ridiculous for me to attempt to criticize anything you write about Russian literature, as you have made it your subject, and I know next to nothing about it ; but I will say that I wish you hadn't given Maurice Baring so much importance in your preliminary chapter : I wish you had served him, *de Quincey* fashion, and "brayed his fungous brains in a mortar with a lady's fan, or throttled him between heaven and earth with a finger and thumb," then tossed him aside. All in about half a page. And this leads to another matter—an important one where we differ fundamentally. You rage against those who exalt Tolstoy and Dostoevsky in order to depreciate Turgenev, and in denouncing them you fall (or nearly so) into their very fault, by holding up Turgenev as a far greater artist than his two great rivals ! No doubt he *was* a greater artist but—and here's where our difference comes in—to be a great, an *exquisite*, artist is not the greatest thing. A great artist (to my poor mind) is a quite small being compared to a great man. Now Turgenev, extraordinarily beautiful and loveable as you show him to be, was not what one would call a great man—apart from his literary works. And Tolstoy, I take it, was a great man in spite of his faults, his ugliest blots and his insane delusions about non-resistance. His character made him great, and if he "followed his genius till it led him to insanity" it did not make him less great. Being what he was, he would have appeared less great to us

if he had been like Turgenev, a perfect, an exquisite, artist. I can imagine that if some great man—King Alfred, or St. Francis of Assisi, or St. Xavier, or Loyola—had written novels with Tolstoy's insight into men's motives and his almost supernatural power of displaying his own intense spirituality in many of the characters he created, they would have been works like "Peace and War" and other works of the greatest of the Russians.

But I've written at too great length already so no more. I may go away in about eight or ten days from now—but don't know yet.

Ever yours affectionately,

W. H. HUDSON

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40 ST. LUKE'S ROAD W.II *November 29th 1917*

DEAR GARNETT

I had hoped to get away before Dec. 4, but find I can't leave quite so soon. However, I don't go out at tea-time—or don't engage to do so as I fear for cold and wet at that hour (having no umbrella), but I go out to lunch, and if you can come Monday or Tuesday and lunch with me at Whiteley's I should be glad to see you to say goodbye. I suppose you have seen both Edward Thomas's posthumous books : I am a little disappointed in both, though in the "Literary Pilgrim" there are one or two papers I like. What do you think of the three of Henry James ? His "Middle Years" strikes me as very thin, very poor stuff, in spite of the good stories in it—that of George Eliot for instance ; but the style—his dear last style which he abhorred the critical world for not liking—spoils it all. Far better is the "Ivory Tower," and better still the "Sense of the Past." I wish he had lived to

finish that book though it would not have been equal in merit perhaps to the best he had done—"Roderick Hudson," for instance. He had a pose about his early work—he pretended to disparage it : but a friend of mine and his once said to him, "Maybe you'll be furious with me for saying that 'Roderick Hudson' is your greatest book." He started back, threw up his hands in his usual way, and said, "Well, well, well—you think so ! you think so—dear ! dear !" Then suddenly sinking his voice he whispered, "You are right—I think so too." The sequel "Casamassima" was not nearly so vivid in the characterization, and I think the same may be said of all the works that followed. Some are hardly readable to me.

I've had a cold the last few days (in my head), but it seems going off now, and it has been of advantage to me in one way—it kept me in so that I was able to get some work done. Of course it has to lie accumulating (the work not the cold) for the present. The other day I met your old friend Rice on the Tube at Waterloo and we travelled together to Paddington—he on his way to Bristol. He wants me to offer a little volume of short sketches I'm finishing to Murray, as I had promised to give Reginald Smith the refusal of it not long before he went west.

Yours affectionately,

W. H. HUDSON

You must let me know about coming to lunch—and state your own time.

40 ST. LUKE'S ROAD WESTBOURNE PARK W.II

December 8th 1917

DEAR GARNETT

I find I shall not be able to get off on Monday as I intended, and if you get this down there to-morrow I should like to have a line from you about the MS. of "Far Away and Long Ago." That is if you have looked at it. If you write to-morrow evening or Monday I would have it on Tuesday morning. I'm rather anxious about it, as if I followed my own inclination I should let the thing lie for a few months ; but I'm urged to finish and send it to the publisher at once ; and considering my state of health it would be best for me to try to finish one way or the other as quickly as possible, although it will not be so well done as it would be if I could wait.

Yours affectionately,

W. H. HUDSON

If your letter comes after I've gone it will go on after me to Exeter.

WAVERLEY CENTRAL HOTEL EXETER *December 14th 1917*

DEAR GARNETT

Thanks for your letter and the MS., which I received before leaving London. I'm staying here till to-morrow and shall then go on to Looe or Fowey I think, as from all I hear Kingsbridge is a rather unsuitable place for the winter.

Of course those middle chapters would interest you more in the book, but the real interest of the book is the feeling for nature and wild life—and *that* appeals only to those who have it in them, in whom it is a passion and more to them

than interest in human character and affairs. If the book is worth anything it is that in it and nothing else—at all events it is certainly not in the human portraits. No doubt you are right about the conclusion—it *must* have the addition, which is no easy matter, but I must try to elude it by slurring over a lot and accentuating the *healing* effect of nature when my life was a hopeless wreck. Coleridge expresses the idea in his “Remorse”—“With other ministrations thou, oh Nature, healest thy wandering and distempered child,” etc. etc.

I fancy that Coleridge is almost unique among the poets in this : that being a pure poet—a poet’s poet, as the saying is, a footless bird of Paradise—he nevertheless thinks and puts thoughts in his poetry. You can’t say that of other birds of Paradise. Swinburne, for example. One can *feel* with such poets : with Coleridge I can often think as well as feel.

It is rather cold and dull here. Swarming with soldiers, and about 3000 wounded in the town.

Shall let you know when I get settled.

Yours affectionately,

W. H. HUDSON

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23 NORTH PARADE PENZANCE January 23rd 1918

DEAR GARNETT

I thought you knew where I had got “to” and that you had sent me the MS. here, but I suppose it was returned to me before I left. You must have had a letter from Looe when I was there. I was also at Fowey, and not finding those places suitable I gave them up. They would have done well enough if, as formerly, I could have spent my time roaming

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about the moors and hills and, like the fox, come back to sleep in my hole in the cliff. I didn't want to be shut in in holes like Fowey, so I came on to Penzance which is more level and open, and you can go out in any direction without having to crawl and climb. I didn't want you to write in praise of the book; * I should have preferred dispraise, or at all events criticism. I quite expected you would have told me to re-write the first and perhaps another chapter or two. As to its being a "masterpiece," that's all your fun. I haven't done the finishing part yet, but when I can do it (if I ever do do it) I shall ask you to read it. Dent wants the book (he had a part of it to look at) so I suppose Rhys read it, but I shall want your opinion (and his too) about keeping in or cutting out the portion I am going to add. I haven't seen any friend since I came here, over three weeks ago; but if it ever leaves off raining (it never does in Penzance) I shall try to get over to Hayle, Lelant and St. Ives to see my friends. To these places I shall be able to go by train, but to Zennor and St. Burian when I want to go it is impossible as you can't have a motor for visiting, and the old rotten flies are no use. To the Land's End one can go by the motor omnibus, and so I shall go there one day, though many of my friends have gone and others are dead. I have had many accounts of the vile weather in London and of the mildness just now. May it last. And may the cursed raiders keep away. The Galsworthys are staying at Beach Hotel, Littlehampton, till June next. I have duly congratulated him on *not* receiving a knighthood. Someone says to me: "He might have declined it more graciously since, after all, it is from the King his majesty." To which I reply, Fiddle-de-dee!

My love to Constance.

Yours affectionately,

W. H. HUDSON

* *Far Away and Long Ago.*

23 NORTH PARADE PENZANCE *February 12th 1918*

DEAR GARNETT

I've just got this last part from the typist and before I start making any alterations or additions I want to know what you will say to it. I can't feel satisfied myself, but I know I can't do anything as an end to that book about my boyhood and nature that would satisfy me. I want your opinion first—shall I let it go as it is (or with a long paragraph about the Old Gaucho which must go in) or cut it down to half, or let the book be without it? I suppose if I do have to keep it in it would be best to make it two chapters instead of one. I hope you are well. With kind regards,

Yours affectly,

W. H. HUDSON

23 NORTH PARADE PENZANCE *February 15th 1918*

DEAR GARNETT

Thanks for letter and MS. returned. I can't say yet whether I shall follow your advice or not—I had better, as I'm accustomed to do in such cases, put it away and think no more about it and it will work out in the sub-conscious mind. I am going to put in the old gaucho story who *knew* that we had no souls and that there was no after life : and then let the thing lie as it is. You see I can't send the MS. to a publisher as there is the American publisher to settle with as well, so the thing must leave my hands in its entirety and finally when I've done with it. And I'm too sick of that last chapter to go over it again now : I hate the very

thought of it, and would rather let the book go without it than have to go over and alter it at present. Perhaps in a month or two I may be able to go back to it. Once it is finished I don't care a straw whether it goes for publication or not : it will come out some day. Just now I'm more interested in other books I've been doing : one of little sketches and two papers about animals. The sketches Murray will publish when I've got the book done.

I'm shocked to hear of poor C. I wish you had given me some particulars of the case. I liked him, though he was so quiet and reticent. Y. kept him crushed I suppose.

Ever yours affectionately,

W. H. HUDSON

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40 ST. LUKE'S ROAD W.II October 22nd 1918

DEAR GARNETT

It is always grateful to me to hear of a friend or individual who has found some pleasure in a book of mine,* but nothing do I care for the stuff in the papers and I daresay when you suppose I'm "overwhelmed" it was "writ sarkastic." Good God no ! all those twenty or thirty columns of it I've seen so far had not one thought in it all to give me any pleasure. J. T. is not too original : we have been hearing of that soldiers' Party for years now, but I doubt they will get things done. Things are being done all the time, as I see every day : as for example the way the wounded and crippled men are caught up and taught a trade and helped and a life, better perhaps than the pre-war one before they had suffered a wound, opened up to them. The Press may be as bad as

* *Far Away and Long Ago*. Dent & Sons. 1918.

he says, I don't know nor care, but one has to remember that it is a subject about which he cherished personal feelings. But to say the Civilian population is impossible is to talk nonsense ; there are plenty of impossible people, but there are millions all over the land, in every village in England, who from the first have taken the war seriously and have done as much to save us from the German Hell as the fighters at the front. Duckworth doesn't care much about " The Purple Land " I suppose, and paper is a difficulty if he has let it run out of print. When I feel well enough, if I ever do, I'll try to find you a copy among my books and send it. I have been unwell this long time past, and the last fortnight confined to my bedroom. . . . It has come at a peculiarly awkward time as I've let my flat for the winter and must turn out by Nov. 2. And I'll then leave London for the winter I hope. I have just had a letter of ten or twelve pages from C. Graham, who has been reading my book and is full of old S. American memories of his own. Why can't he write, I wonder ? I tell him his stuff is more refreshing and stimulating to me than all the other writers of the day. And so it is. Yet he has been to Bogotá and not a word does he tell us about it. My servant has just come and carried off the letters I had written as it is afternoon post time, so this will have to wait till to-night or to-morrow.

Yours affectionately,

W. H. HUDSON

Oct. 24. Sorry I couldn't get my letters posted when I wrote this : I've been out the first time to-day—in a taxi to consult a specialist in Wimpole St. He finds my trouble is Cystitis, and thinks he will soon give me ease, and says I can travel to Worthing this week.

23 NORTH PARADE PENZANCE *March 2nd 1919*

DEAR GARNETT

You write to me once in six months, and your letter then consists of three lines or two and a half ! You will say that you send a book and that's enough. It is not, as a book is not a letter but a formal thing. And I've no time for politics : the dailies, weeklies, monthlies, quarterlies have oceans of it, but not a word do I read, as I want to use whatever time remains to me in doing my own work. The world is a shambles, but I wasn't born to set it right.

What made you imagine I was at Eastbourne ! Of all the South coast towns from Hastings to Lyme Regis that high and mighty fashionable resort is the one I detest, and if someone offered me a freehold house as a gift just to have me for a neighbour I should decline it. When I saw you in summer, when we lunched at Whiteley's, I said that I intended going as usual to Cornwall for the winter months.

I felt very bad about Stephen Reynolds' premature death. For some years past I have always met him once or twice each winter down here, Penzance, Falmouth, St. Ives, somewhere and I was just looking out for him, constantly expecting to see him, when the news of his death came. He had done good work, but it was nothing to what he had it in him to do. His books are not great : he had no imagination—his one attempt at a work of imagination was a ghastly thing. But he had a tremendous reasoning brain, and he was too big to stand forever on that narrow plot of ground when the end came to him. I have a book of Nat. Hist. in the press—a good-sized volume it will make, and I'm very busy with something else. My reading is most at night, and I get no new books. I bring in an armful of old stuff from the Penzance library, and have been reading again " Imaginary Conversations " ; but, good Lord, one gets tired of being

long at that elevation, sitting on a column as it were, so I come down and take to Johnson's "Lives of the Poets." One never gets tired of Dr. Johnson : and the reason is—well, we all know the reason. Also I've just read "Erasmus: his Praise of Folly." He was a great person in his day : spiritually minded, as when he writes that the great pleasure and advantage of being in England is that you can salute all the ladies in the houses you visit, both on arrival and departure! But his solemn Folly doesn't interest one much now. Our weather is improving now, and I've been for a visit to the Land's End and am going to get about more now as my eyes begin to feel tired.

With love to you both,

Yours,

W. H. HUDSON

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40 ST. LUKE'S ROAD W.II *July 2nd 1919*

DEAR GARNETT

I came back from Worthing yesterday. I only had one week there as I am but recently back from Cornwall and have my affairs to settle here.

I should like much to see the "Vie d'un Simple" you tell me about : it is the sort of book that interests me. I read your review of the two American books in the "Nation" at Penzance, and that is all I know of them. About the mysterious bird sound. I can't think it can be the Goldet Oriole. The whistle of the Oriole is very loud, and it has a fine quality in it too, but not exactly the one you say it has. But of course it would be difficult to say what it was without seeing the bird, unless one has been accustomed to hear it in all its variations. Bird sounds do vary a good deal. That

sound "as of a harp-string being struck by a quill" is one I have heard in S. America but in no bird in England and not in the Golden Oriole on the one occasion I heard it in its one and only breeding place in this country. It is very beautiful in a queer bird of Patagonia—a plover in its feet (with three toes) and a sand-piper in its long slender bill, only the sound has not the sharp or percussive effect of the string struck by a quill, but rather twanged with the finger. Then we have the *Vandaria*, an ibis big as a turkey, called *Vandaria* because of its note which sounds like the old Spanish instrument of that name—a big stringed instrument of *one string*. The ibis repeats the note rapidly many times, and it is loud enough to be heard two miles away. Alas ! we have no great musical bird-voices in England. When I was a boy on a still, warm winter morning we used to stand out of doors listening to the great cries of waterfowl in the lagoons one, two and even three miles away—the *Vandaria*, the great rail, the Crested Screamer, the Courlan called "Crazy Widow" and others the loathsome cursed civilization of Europe has now blotted out for ever and ever.

I wonder if you are going to be in London on Monday next, if you would care to come over this way and lunch with me at Whiteley's ? Let it remain open—you needn't write—but I shall be there at one o'clock on Monday next, as I lunch there every day : all my other days are engaged, and I may go to Worthing on Tuesday next.

With love to both,

Yours,

W. H. H.

40 ST. LUKE'S ROAD W.II July 1919

MY DEAR GARNETT

I have only just finished the "Life of a Man"*: it took me a long time because reading it was a difficult job as I only read novels in bed in daylight hours, and when up I'm not in a mood for that sort of reading. And it wasn't easy in bed to manage that disorderly bad bundle of galley-slips a yard long, fastened together with some slips placed wrong and others missing. I find it very interesting and I daresay it will be still more so to readers who swallow the laudations of the Editor and remember that they are occupied with a unique work, a work of a genius, and so on.

The English title is a bad mistake. The Life of a Man (anyone would say) is the life of a man—an average being, one like himself, educated, a traveller perhaps, a complex being certainly, whose life has perhaps been rather more eventful than most lives. Most assuredly it would not mean the life of a peasant in France, who never knew his a, b, c, and never went twelve miles from the spot where he was born, and from childhood to extreme old age toiled fifteen hours per day on an average.

The French reader who takes up "La vie d'un Simple" is not tricked as the English reader will probably think he had been. The Life of a French Peasant wouldn't have looked attractive but would be honest. I could suggest a still better title, that is, more fully descriptive of the book, but probably it would seem too long :—

"The Autobiography of a French Peasant put into literary form by his Friend, a well-known accomplished novelist, who reads a good deal of his own mind into the Autobiographer's ; and incidentally indulges in a

* *The Life of a Simple Man.* By Emile Guillaumin. Foreword by Edward Garnett. Selwyn & Blount. 1919.

good deal of moralizing and philosophizing, but in a casual, light, airy way, with wit and irony, something after the manner of Horace Walpole."

I came up a few days ago from Worthing meaning to go back before Bank Holiday, but have felt too unwell the last few days. I have constant heart troubles, and it makes it almost impossible for me to get anything finished. I don't know where you are, but I should think just now you can't be in town so will address the Cearne.

With love to you all,

Yrs.,

W. H. HUDSON

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40 ST. LUKE'S ROAD W.II August 7th 1919

DEAR GARNETT

Your introduction to the "Life of a Simple Man" is just what I do very much want to see, and hope you will let me see it. You say I'm wrong in my judgment of the work, but by implication you say I'm right when you add that the author "happens to possess great literary talents" and so on. It would have been better if he had not made so much use of that same talent since he elected to tell his father's story in autobiographical form. The two things you see—the laborious life of the illiterate peasant and the literary talent—don't go together. So that the book is the book of two men and is not an autobiography.

I have been waiting for some days to feel better in order to get down to Worthing and can't be sure of being here on Monday next. If I am here and all right I can wire to you on Monday to drop in and have tea at Whiteley's—or lunch.

Yours ever

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W. H. HUDSON

23 NORTH PARADE PENZANCE February 20th 1920

DEAR GARNETT

I told you long, long ago in answer to your last letter that I was here *for the winter* (if I existed that long), just as last winter and the one before, so that this has become as permanent an address as the London one. Of all the people who ever write to me you are the most stingy, as after three or four months your letter consists of a tricklet of words running down one side of a page—near its border, and no more! Whereas those of my friends who have absolutely nothing to say flood me with intolerably long epistles. Why is it? I read the “Nation” every week and try to identify you in some reviews and that seems the only link (or whatever, as H. J. used to say). Doing nothing—practically—I brought the first half of a book about Nature and Man’s Senses* when I came down, hoping to go on with it, and have *not touched it*. Chiefly because my heart got so weak I could not do anything, except an occasional small thing. Then, just lately, when the desire to work became too strong I set to do a small thing—a tragical story which has nothing to do with my own particular line. But I remember that I once wrote a story called “Marta Riquelme” and may be able to recover the power to do something particularly black and buggy even now. It will only be short—less than “El Ombú”—and if I can finish it I’ll ask your coldest judgment on it. Yes, I love Tchekov’s stories—all I’ve read of them, but have not seen those translated by Constance. Please give her and David and yourself my love, and please be a little more generous of words.

Yours,

W. H. HUDSON

Very grieved to hear of
Mrs. Radford’s death.

I did not know her personally.

* Subsequently abandoned by Hudson, acting on a friend’s advice.

23 NORTH PARADE PENZANCE February 26th 1920

DEAR GARNETT

My best thanks to Constance for the gift of the two delightful Tchehov volumes. They will be a great pleasure to me to read. I had already seen the "Athenæum," and read your sketch and guessed it was about the reformer Fox whose remains your father burdened himself with and then left to you. The library in Penzance, which belongs to a syndicate of the principal persons in this part of Cornwall, is a great boon to me—I take a six months' subscription when I come to Penzance—as they have the best periodicals in the reading-room and a vast collection of good books of reference. They are only wanting in modern works of science and psychology. And I should think that there have been more works in psychology published during the last 25 years than in the two centuries before. One would think that the principal study of mankind is man, just man—not his political or social history but more the thinking beast, and his history as one of the quadrupeds, or mammals. It is of course very fascinating and of course leads to pessimism—the sort of despair which the brothers Adams reflect in their works. There is an article about them in this very "Athenæum," which you probably saw. Young Massingham is I know a tremendously energetic person—he and his wife both write to me occasionally, and he is now fighting for a law to exclude feathers from our markets—in which I'm with him heart and soul. I fancy from what I can remember that you patted Miss Richardson a little too kindly on her back. One gets rather sick and tired of her everlasting Marion.* At any rate I don't want to see all of a person's inside. Unless it is a more interesting inside than Marion's. Marie Bashkirtseff's for

* *Interim*. By Dorothy M. Richardson. Duckworth. 1919.

example. Thanks for offering to lend me Blunt's "Indiscretions." I've read the first volume and shall very likely get the other from a friend who lent me the first : so I had better wait, and if it doesn't come I can borrow your copy at some future time. Also, in the future I may ask for the loan of "Among Italian Peasants."* Just now I have more than I can read or do. I don't know anything about Galsworthy's cousin. I have just had a letter from a lady who says she is reading "The Man of Property" for the second time and she can't read "Saint's Progress." I daresay we all fall off, and it would show if I dared to attempt a story now. But about Nature and Life it is different—one can go on till one dies of sheer old age without any sign of declension. That last book of mine—I'll have a copy sent to you by H. S.—has brought me a continuous stream of letters on such subjects from all over America—from Florida to Seattle. Yesterday I had one of about 40 pages from Vancouver, B.C. I wish David had chosen to be on the land (man's proper place) instead of in a bookstore. But I don't suppose he or you or Constance think so.

My health keeps bad so I can't do much and doubt if I shall ever finish another book. Are you going to have a shot at the £50 prize the "Athenæum" offers for an essay on Eng. Lit. since 1914?

With love to all,

Yours,

W. H. HUDSON

P.S. Do you know Henry Jenner, who was for very many years in the Brit. Museum, and a great friend of Dr. Garnett? He lives at Hayle, and I see him over here at the library every week. He is an interesting man and knows more than anyone else in the universe about Cornish history and antiquities and language.

* *Among Italian Peasants.* By Tony Cyriax. Collins. 1919.

23 NORTH PARADE PENZANCE March 18th 1920

DEAR GARNETT

Did you receive the "Book of a Naturalist" sent by Hodder & Stoughton on Feb. 28 last?

Also can you tell me if you remember a book published a few years ago entitled "The Life of St. Gilbert of *Sempremham*"? You always have your eye on everything that comes out in book form, so you will perhaps remember it. I've asked our great bookman, Bridger, here, and he says it is not in the annual list of published books he has—he has looked for it all through the last fourteen years. Well, I thought it was much more recent than that. I remember that a friend of mine was writing or collecting materials to write a history of St. Gilbert, but he died before it was done. Then the book I've spoken of came out, by some woman, and is no great thing, I believe; but I want to get hold of it, and if you have a copy please lend it to me, and if not tell me if you know anything about it. I could find out if in London. But if you can't give me the information I will ask old Jenner, who lives at Hayle, to write to one of his Brit. Museum friends to find out. I generally see Jenner here every week—he was a great friend of Richard Garnett and was many years with him at the B.M. library.

I haven't finished the story I wrote to you about yet—I may get it done by the end of March and will then send you a typed copy to read—and say that it is poor stuff and will injure my REPUTATION.*

How goes the book business of David's? If he wants to combine reading with selling I could send him a MS.—a sort of fairy-tale, I think, a friend is anxious I should read or find

* An allusion to my telling Hudson in 1905 that the publication of *Ralph Herne* would destroy any writer's reputation.

someone to read who will give a real true judgment and damn the consequences. Of course I declined to look at it : but I fancy David could be trusted to tell us just what it is worth—as literature and commercially.

P.S. I have just had a letter from Richard Curle who is publishing a book of travels.

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23 NORTH PARADE PENZANCE *March 24th* 1920

Thanks for “Songs of the Dead”^{*}—a good subject with a wrong title, seeing as how we can listen to the dead speaking to us or to others and even project ourselves into the ground and speak for ourselves, but the speaking isn’t song or can’t be called song—not properly. The word has too many predominating associations of a different kind—too different an atmosphere. The *form* may be lyrical, and usually is, as in Tennyson’s “Here let the wind sweep and the plover cry, but thou—go by,” or in Emily Brontë’s bitter and poignant “The linnet in the rocky Dell,” and many others, the best of all being Poe’s “For Annie” : there’s no bitterness and no reproaching to the living in this one, nothing but the sense of absolute rest and peace after all the fury and force and strife of living—peace and the imperishable love for Annie ; and sympathy for her in her grief. Speech the most passionate put into lyrical form, but however perfect the form, the expression, the intensity of the emotion which is like a cry of anguish overrides the form as it were, so that we can’t think of it as song. To call it so is to say “the thing that is not,” to quote the words of the Houyhnhnms—the horses—in their conversations with Lemuel Gulliver. Do you know that

^{*} *Songs of the Dead.* By Margaret Napier. Lane, 1920.

even the “dying song” used in poetry but more in opera is also disturbing in its effect on account of its falsity? “And I could weep,” the Oneida chief His discourse wildly thus began, “But that I may not stain with grief, the death-song of my father’s son.”

Dreadful because it is not true—people don’t *sing* when about to die nor in their graves. These you’ll say are trivial objections : well, no—to me, the wrong word in poetry is like the false note in music and jars the brain. As for the poetry itself I think it better than “not bad.” There’s a flash of genius in it, but how many little flashes like it have you not seen ! I, without being a watcher of books from men’s hands as they pour from the press, have seen many. Flashes that flash and then vanish and return not. At this moment I recall two such flashes from young lady poets who have done nothing since. And it may be that Margaret Napier will do no more : for little as she gives us here to judge from the inspiration does not burn to the end : the last half of the book reads like a laboured imitation of the first half. It was, however, worth printing, and just shows what Lane can do in making a book out of material enough to fill half a dozen pages. How nicely he has got it up ; I love blue boards with buff backs, they take me back to the 18th century.

Thick sea fogs prevail here just now : they have caused one wreck at the Lizard so far.

With love from yours,

W. H. HUDSON

23 NORTH PARADE PENZANCE May 29th 1920

DEAR GARNETT

I am now sending you the story* which you see is the old historical one of Edgar and Elfrida, a subject most unsuitable for me, which was forced on me so to speak, and so I should not be surprised to hear that I am out of it here and that it is no good. Well, you will tell me, and all I can say is I will not rewrite it as I've now finished with it, and very glad too, as I should have preferred one of my own natural history subjects—the book I had half written before I came down in fact. But when I came down I put [out] some old envelopes, each containing some notes I had made on some subjects which had interested me at one time. I thought it best to bring them down and look over them to destroy most of them as now useless when I turned out and looked at the Edgar and E. note I had made years ago. I thought I might just try to make a little thing of three or four thousand words and get rid of it in that way instead of destroying it. But the confounded subject would not let me go until I had made this long short story which runs to over 21,000 words. And now I'm fairly sick of it and can do nothing beyond mending any glaringly wrong passage. But you will tell me about that. I want it back in a few days if you can look at it soon, as it is just possible that I may be able to go up pretty soon. I haven't got much benefit from being here, though the London winter would perhaps have carried me off before now if I hadn't got away in November. I haven't been over to St. Ives yet, nor to the Land's End, nor anywhere outside of Penzance as I haven't felt well enough for anything.

What I feel about this thing is that I haven't succeeded in producing the effect aimed at in the character of the woman as the whole and sole interest is in that—the woman who was

* *Dead Man's Plack.*

capable of a horrible crime and who was yet essentially noble in spirit. But as to its being a story of a thousand years ago, that doesn't matter at all seeing that human passions then were what they are to-day and always, and all the archæology stuff is left out. You must say Use it or Burn it and I'll obey.

Yours,

W. H. HUDSON

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23 NORTH PARADE PENZANCE *June 2nd 1920*

DEAR GARNETT

Very many thanks for your helpful letter. I had seen when correcting the MS. that a lot of sentences and phrases ought to come out—and that Fisher allusion and things like that. But about style—the moment it looks artificial it revolts me. I have never conquered my dislike of Morris because of his Saxon words. You did not notice, I dare say, as I don't use quotation marks, that the concluding words of my Preamble are a quote from him : “ Without external aid or compulsion I say I could not make shadows breathe, restore the dead and know what silent mouths once said.” Well, why didn't he stick to his own principle and make the last line :

And know what mouths now dumb once said ?

I suppose it was because his own diction without a Latin word thrown in here and there was too distressing even to himself. If you have ever succeeded in wading through the five huge volumes of the “ Earthly Paradise ” you must have had a sickener of that kind of writing. I'm glad you like the passages I like and think [best.] I sent a copy to Morley Roberts at the same time and *he* says those are the wrong

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passages—that Elfrida's monologues must all be cut short to make the story better.

I hope to go up next week, and you will perhaps be able to come somewhere and lunch with me. To-day I went to Godolphin to visit the Rector there, who last year when I was here was a poor curate with not enough to live on at St. Erths. As he is a queer unconventional fellow I wanted to congratulate him. He told me of a strange man who had spent thirty-two years in Patagonia, living near Godolphin, and as I wished to see him we went off and paid him a visit. He had lived in Tierra del Fuego and on the Straits of Magellan and among the Andes, and also at the Rio Negro, and knew all my old friends there. I asked him why he didn't write his adventures. He said he would get out pen and paper and start writing them right away as soon as I left ! But, poor man, he is past it, I fear, at seventy-eight, after spending twenty years in Cornwall since he came home.

Yours,

W. H. HUDSON

P.S. Ethelbold is one of about twenty variants of the name : I chose Athelwold as it was Hume's choice in his history and is most familiar.

I asked Jenner—the old Brit. Museum man who lives down here—the meaning of *Plack*, but he couldn't say and was disturbed in mind as he professes to know every English and Saxon word. Nor had he ever heard of the tradition of Athelwold's death in Hampshire.

I tell plainly enough where it is—Wherwell, a village on the Test, and the Forest of Harewood is close by, on the Andover side. About 2000 acres of the original forest remain till now, and the owner, the lord of the manor, is Iremonger, and it was one of that family who put up the cross some 80 or 90 years ago at Dead Man's Plack. Probably it means Dead man's *Place*. Elfrida built her monastery at the village where Athelwold's castle had stood, and it continued down

to the dissolution of the monasteries by Henry VIII. But it was once partly destroyed during the horrible wars of Stephen and Maud. But the stone walls remained intact I suppose after it was burnt, as it continued as a nunnery after the wars. And it *exists still*, or partly exists, and is the dwelling house of the Earls of Lovelace : the present man is Byron's great-grandson I fancy. It is in the histories that Elfrida took the veil there and died there. And some say it is still haunted by her ghost. . . .

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EXETER *Tuesday June 8th 1920*

I am on my way to London and shall be lunching at Whiteley's to-morrow. I wonder if you are free and could manage to turn up at the top-floor restaurant at from one to half-past ? If so please try. If not, write what day, as I shall have to go to Worthing pretty soon. Your criticism all perfectly right, except one all wrong.

W. H. H.

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WHITELEY'S READING AND CORRESPONDENCE SALOON

Thursday June 10th 1920

Yours last evening. Monday will suit me best as I shall perhaps go to Worthing on Tuesday, so will look for you here at 1.30.

I see there are some question marks in the second half of
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your letter, but I can't answer as it is all undecipherable. I suppose you are growing very old and blind and shaky : well, it's what we all have to come to, so that's all one can say about it.

Yours,

W. H. H.

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40 ST. LUKE'S ROAD W.II *June 27th* 1920

DEAR GARNETT

Can you lend me the 2nd vol. of Blunt's memoirs ?* He urges me to pay him a visit at Newbuildings, and I really want to see him ; but before going I should like to glance through that second volume.

I have been meeting that other Arabianized Englishman, Colonel Lawrence, the free-lance who fought with the Arabs against the Turks in Mesopotamia—tho' he was never a soldier. He has a tremendous admiration for Doughty and has been to visit him.

I wonder what David thought of Mrs. Naylor's stuff ? I haven't heard from her since. I told her where to send the MS. I shall be in London a week or so longer.

Yours with love,

W. H. HUDSON

* *My Diaries*. Part II. By Wilfred Scawen Blunt. Secker. 1920.

40 ST. LUKE'S ROAD W.II July 1st 1920

DEAR GARNETT

Tell your neighbour that she must go to a shop to *select* the kind that suits her best in *shape* and *size* and above all *weight*. There are several makes and they differ so much that if she orders one merely because someone recommends it she will presently see others she w^d have liked better. A *prismatic* binocular of about 8 magnifying power w^d be best as the 10 and 12 power are very heavy to carry and are not needed as she is not going to look at birds half a league away. I find 7 and 8 power are quite good enough for all I want to see. A good prismatic b. will cost 7 or 8 pounds, or something near that. They are cheaper now than when I got mine when they first came in, and were all made in Germany, as it is purely a German invention. Now they are made by a score of English workers.

About the old novel : the title was " Fan," but it is useless to bother about it as it is no good. Or at any rate it is a book spoiled by one bad thing in it—the character of the heroine a poor girl of the slums who developes into an impossibly refined creature. I remember the " Spectator's " good criticism, w^h was that the book made you angry because it was no better.

To-morrow when I post this I will send you a copy of the American edition of " Little Boy Lost," as it contains a post-script which is not in the English edition and which explains my reason for writing the book. Also the Americans are printing their books better than we are. I saw H. Dent to-day and he gave me a copy of " Rescue." He says there's to be a uniform edition of Conrad by Heinemann. Dent was going to produce it but H. wouldn't consent as he wanted to do it, so Dent gave way, and so did Unwin, who had refused

consent at first. Of course it will be only one limited edition. I had my lunch to-day at the Mont Blanc after long years. No one I knew there.

Yours,

W. H. H.

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40 ST. LUKE'S ROAD W.II July 11th 1920

DEAR GARNETT

I return Blunt's "Diaries" with thanks for the loan and apologies for keeping the book so long : but I found it extremely interesting, and little as I care about politics, I wanted to read it all. I may be going down this week to see him : I should have gone on Friday and again yesterday if I had felt fit, but I have been having sleepless nights again.

I have just given a preliminary look at "Poems in Captivity"* and will read it in the country : that I *can* read it I know as I do like what I have read. But you are out of it in comparing him to Longfellow. It is true Longfellow was simple, but his mind and verse were different from this. He was saturated in learning, and got more from books than from nature, and he had a religious regard for words. Besides he was a poet always—even the simplest line he ever wrote does not sink below the level of poetry. But Still does not trouble himself much about the atmosphere or the association of words. And he is hardly a poet, although he has plenty of poetic feeling to put into his verse. It reads to me like a very very simple prose arranged in verse form, and the only interest in it is in the pictures he conveys to you. And he certainly has the power to convey them well. I can imagine him in his prison life finding his consolation in sitting or lying with eyes

* *Poems in Captivity*. By John Still. Lane. 1920.

closed and watching with his mind's eye the procession of sights—tree, and temple, and man and beasts of strange forms, and a thousand things—slowly trailing past, and he putting it all down in rhyme, or verse, not troubling himself about diction but simply concerned in presenting the picture to the reader as it appears to him. Here I open the book at random, and the first line that catches my eye is—"What a ghastly tragedy warfare seems!" There are hundreds of lines like that so you cannot say I am hypercritical as to the *poetry*. But in spite of that the book is strangely interesting.

Yours ever,

W. H. HUDSON

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23 NORTH PARADE PENZANCE December 14th 1920

DEAR GARNETT

I was away and so had to order a copy of "Dead Man's Plack" from Dent for you and other friends. I've seen Clutton-Brock's review—it is his I think—and I am not disposed to find fault with it. On the contrary I agree with all his strictures. The fact is I think meanly of all my books, and certainly make no exception of this one. Why will you always introduce political remarks in your letters when as I've often said I'm not a politician and don't even look at anything of that sort in the newspaper I read? Thus on that subject we are not in the same world—or not on the same plane. Mine is the simple one, the uncomplex, and I live the life of reason and common sense, but it is the lower sort of reason based on instinct—shelter, food, self-preservation and all that. The ultra-civilized higher minds are in another stage—the phantasmagorical ideal—ideals swarming and humming like bees in a hive and in that higher state all things,

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all actions, have quite a different aspect. Thus, you will see men banding themselves together to go about murdering men, women and children in cold blood and find no fault with them, but even love and applaud them because of the lofty religious and political motives w^h inspire their actions. These crimes, as we on the lower plane would call them, may seem to you the highest altruism. Naturally you are pained and angry that there should be people of so low a mentality as to want to interfere with them and give blow for blow and bullet for bullet.

Thus you say that England will be punished for this monstrous wicked Government, that an awful doom is about to fall on all of us, but I'm glad that you add (not very logically) that we may not live to see it. I'm glad because I want to stay where I am till I die, and although I am convinced that *all* Governments are bad and must be bad because they are composed of human beings, *this* one is the best to be found on this dim hell which men call earth.

Thanks for the Catalogue—it is a nice artistic cover. I will pass one on to old Jenner, your father's friend of years ago at the Brit. Museum. He flourishes and is very active down here.

I want to hear the Story of the King of the Condors very much. I think I've read it somewhere long years ago and have forgotten it.

I was very ill in London all November but could not get away till Dec. 3, then had 4 days in Exeter before coming on here. On Saturday evening I took tea with people I know in the higher part of the town, and returning late when the dark was profound I stepped off a pavement 5 feet high and crashed down to the stony street below. Fortunately I came down on my hand and saved my skull at the small expense of a sprained wrist and a hole made by a sharp stone in my hand. I thought to myself, No more holding a pen for many a long day to come ! But already after 3 days I *can* hold a pen, as you see, and yesterday and to-day

I must have answered close on 20 letters forwarded from London.

I wonder if David's mate is any relation to Mr. Obiter Dicta ?

Penzance too is sheeted with snow and it doesn't melt : but it is a blessed change from damp, chill, foggy London ; in spite of the cold, *we* have sunshine.

Yours ever,

W. H. HUDSON

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23 NORTH PARADE PENZANCE February 6th 1921

DEAR GARNETT

Thanks for letting me see the Condor King story. My comments on it are contained in the enclosed letter to Mr. Prodgers : you may read it if you like and post letter to him if you know the address, and if not, to care of his publisher. I'm glad you've got the Ricardi Doughty. It must be a fine book. Salt sent me his "Savages,"* and it is very readable and amusing, but I was somewhat disappointed as I had hoped he w^d have done a bigger book than this with so much material to work with. I had no fall at *Exeter*—it was here, in this town of Penzance, and I have got over that ; but my general health doesn't improve and *can't*, I should say, because it is the weak heart w^h prevents me getting walking exercise. Otherwise I'm quite well—or as well as one can be who can only keep himself alive with daily doses of digitalis. I am able to do a little writing each day, but have not touched the book I had got half done 2 years ago. Last winter I wrote

* *Seventy Years Among Savages.* By Henry Salt. Allen & Unwin. 1921.

some papers and "Dead Man's Plack"; and so it has been now : I have finished a volume of short sketches w^h Dent wants to bring out in the spring. Just now I've been scribbling some Nat. Hist. and have sent a long article on "Do Cats Think?" w^h Leonard Huxley says is delightful, and he's going to put it in the Cornhill.

I'm glad David is succeeding. Jenner took one catalogue of the 2 you sent, and Bridge, the great Penzance bookseller, asked me for the other, as he had not seen one. "Those two names, B. and G., will ensure their success," he said. I saw the Massingham review in the "Nation" but forget most of it so can't say how it w^d do if turned upside down. Yes, I'm very fond of Checkov.

Yours with love to all,

W. H. HUDSON

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23 NORTH PARADE PENZANCE *May 14th 1921*

DEAR GARNETT

I didn't answer your letter sooner because I had intended going to London about this time if well enough. But I can't venture on the journey yet as I don't improve at all. And just now we are having a cold spell after a long one of almost hot summer weather. A few times I've had a car and taken a run out to the coast, on one occasion going quite round from St. Ives to Land's End and back—45 miles ; but as the mileage is pretty stiff it runs into a good deal. Walking I can't do except just a little way to the sea front and the library. Lots of people here invite me to their houses but I don't go. My visits are mostly confined to the cottages I know. But I have many callers. A while ago I had Trevelyan

and his daughter Mary, who has been my correspondent for some years and is now about 16. And their host Arnold Forster came with them. They staid with him at the Eagles' Nest, that castle-like house on the summit of a hill near Zennor. Trevelyan gave me all his books about Garibaldi, etc., some time ago, but he said nothing about his war experiences in Italy. Morley Roberts also came down on a 10 days' visit to me. He has had a great success in the scientific world with his "Warfare in the Human Body."

My congratulations to David. Better married than single of course, and better still if he has got a good helpmate and companion.

I am glad to hear of an Oriole on the Chart and only hope the bird will nest there. They have been blotted out by collectors in every place but are in England now, and are immediately collected wherever they appear. That paper, "Do Cats Think?" has brought me a lot of letters, and the Editor of the "Strand" has bought the second serial rights to put it into his magazine. A funny thing for him to do! Dent has put off publication of the book of sketches. He wants the other book first—but I'm sure it can't be finished for the autumn season—it is too long and difficult and I am going too slow. Dent was intending to come down on a visit to me here, but has given it up as he is not well. Hasn't David got out another catalogue yet? With love to Constance and yourself,

Yours ever,

W. H. HUDSON

40 ST. LUKE'S ROAD W.II *Thursday June 15th 1922*

DEAR GARNETT

I came back on Tuesday—after six months and a half absence. Thanks for offer of the books, which I shall be glad to have. Gosse, Squire and Murray have been giving us their reviews at a pretty fast rate lately. I shall perhaps find something I haven't read before in your book*; but the papers I know are good to have again. But I'd rather talk than write over such matters, so perhaps you will be able to come over to Whiteley's and lunch with me soon—it must be soon as I want to go to Worthing. What about Monday next? But I will leave it to you to say when and the hour most convenient to you. I shall have to lunch there every day at present. I am sorry to hear that Constance has been troubled with a weak heart. That is my curse always, and I really didn't expect to come back ever to London when I went away in November. However, I managed to do some work and get a book practically finished.

Remember me to Constance.

Yours,

W. H. HUDSON

July 1st 1922

Thanks for the Tolstoy : I'm returning it as I can borrow it from the L. Library through a friend. I only wanted to glance through it, and French is so difficult and I read it so slowly I don't want to waste time over a practically useless

* *Friday Nights*. Literary Criticisms and Appreciations. By Edward Garnett. Cape. 1922.

book just to pick something small out of it—a speck of [word indecipherable] floating about in the pool. Will let you know when I get back from Worthing Saturday.

Yours,

W. H. HUDSON

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40 ST. LUKE'S ROAD W.II *saturday july 29 1922*

DEAR GARNETT

I am still here—unable to get away yet as I got a bad toe, which made me lame, and I couldn't go visiting with a loose pair of house-shoes and a limp. Also I was anxious to finish some writing which presents unusual difficulties. The book* I have parted with to Dent on this side and Dutton in America ends somewhat abruptly—or just breaks off as it had to do seeing that it was what I had called a Story without an end. And something more was wanted to bring it down more easily. Perhaps when it is done you will look at it and give your opinion, although the things I have to say in it will go against your deepest convictions—about art for instance.

Thanks for the cutting about Animal Friendships from the "Manchester Guardian." It is interesting in some degree like all compilations of the kind where the facts have been selected out of a number of books. I am always more interested in a fresh observation, and in my chapter on that subject I give several fresh instances of such friendships. They are in "Adventures among Birds." What interests me much more is the "Manchester Guardian's" review of your "Friday Nights," the first I have seen with which I thoroughly agree. Did I not see such a review as the

** A Hind in Richmond Park.*

“ M.G.’s ” ? I think I did. But perhaps the best was Middleton Murray’s in the “ Nation.” I don’t always agree with M. M., but I am one with him in this.

I shall be at Whiteley’s to lunch on Monday—one to one-thirty—if you should find it convenient to come and meet me.

I have seen no one I know this long time past, except the Rothensteins and Violet Hunt, who live close by, and Massingham and Speedwell who came one day to lunch with me. C. Graham has just written me from Cardross, and Salt from somewhere else. I daresay everyone who can is away or going by now.

Yrs. ever,

W. H. HUDSON

*Pen sketch referred to in the letter of
July 29th, 1903, page 50.*



as seen from Cerne Abbas



180 feet long

The Cerne Giant

Letters
from

W. H.
HUDSON
